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CHRISTMAS STORIES

Told in a Happy Home (Hazelnook) in New England

BY

HARRIET FARLEY

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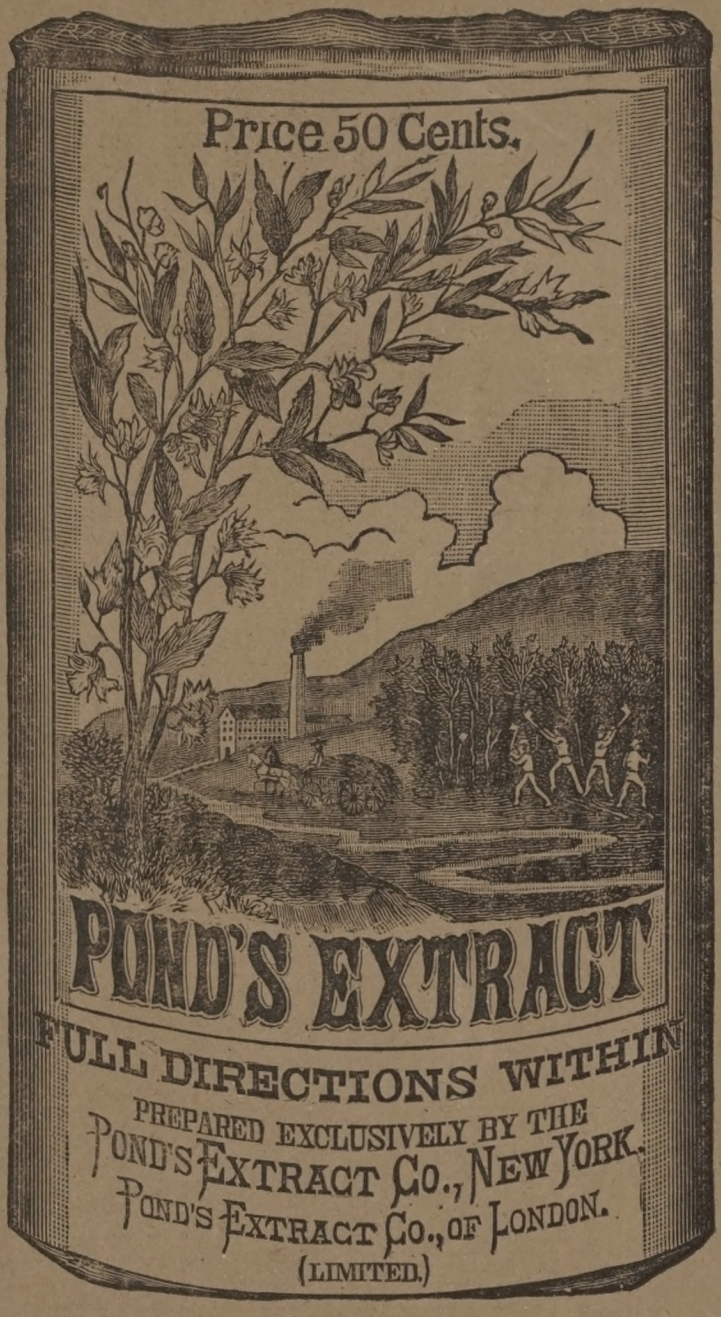

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TOLD IN A HAPPY HOME (HAZELNOOK)
IN NEW ENGLAND

BY

HARRIET FARLEY

NEW YORK
JOHN W. LOVELL COMPANY
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1884

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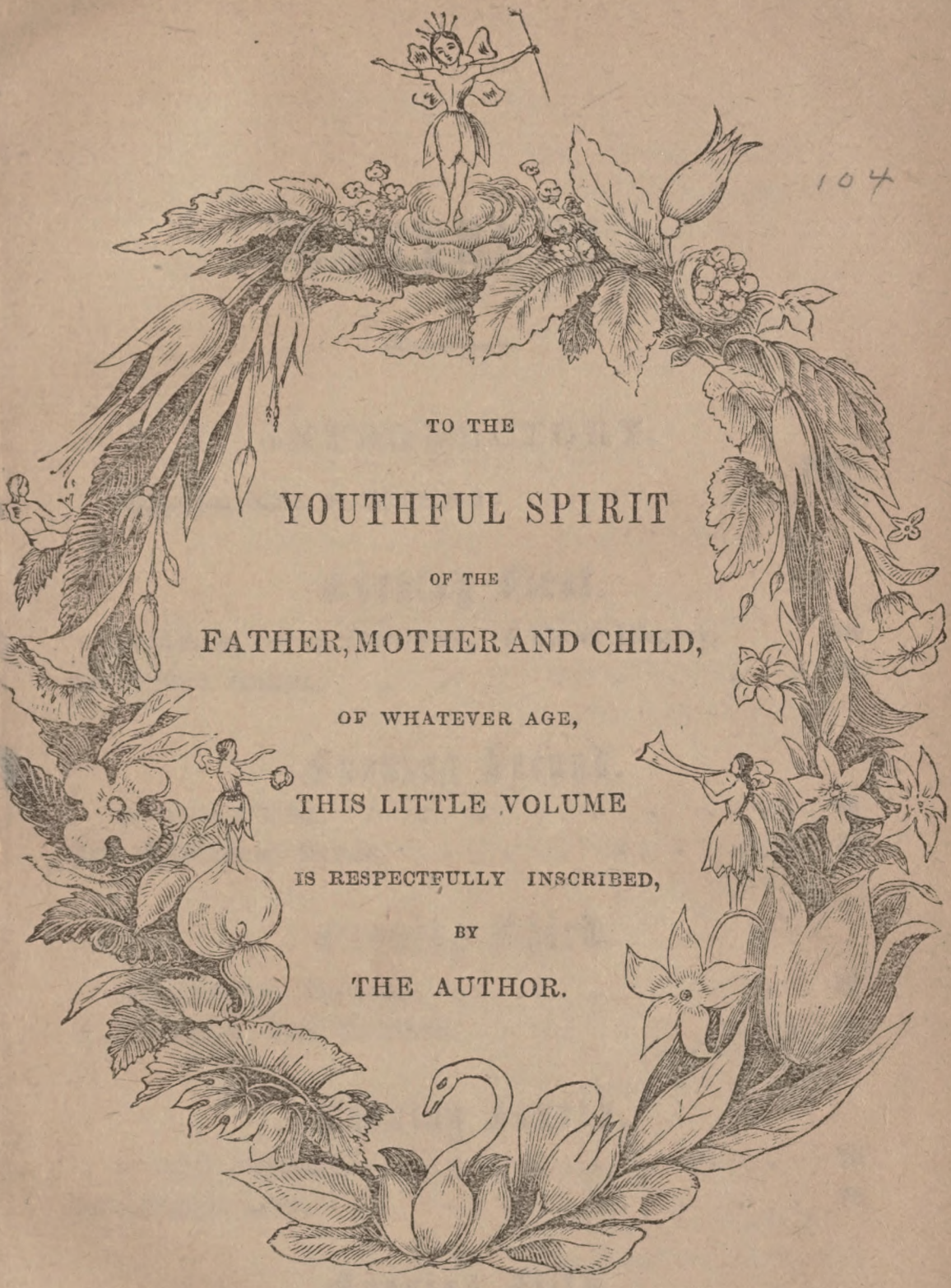

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TO THE

YOUTHFUL SPIRIT

OF THE

FATHER, MOTHER AND CHILD,

OF WHATEVER AGE,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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HAPPY HOURS.

INTRODUCTION.

CHRISTMAS MORN AT HAZELNOOK.

"A MERRY Christmas!" "A merry Christmas!" was the mingled shout of many voices, as the headlong Katie and her younger cousins burst into the breakfast room.

"A merry Christmas!" "A merry Christmas!" was shouted loudly in return; for hot coffee and buckwheat cakes had gathered a prompt party around the extended table. Ben, who prided himself upon being a scrap of a wag, prolonged the cry, with a forestalment of future greetings, such as, "Happy New Year," "Gay Twenty-Second," "Bright April Fool," "Pleasant May-Day," "Glorious Fourth," and "Bountiful Thanksgiving."

"O Ben," said Katie, "how shameful, not to leave others a chance! But I'll be even with you on the philopœna!"

"Stop threats and prophesyings," exclaimed Ben; "and now, Phil, let us compare, not notes, but stockings. I subtracted, this morning, from mine, a multiplication of mysteries, viz., a billetdoux in a dear little elfin chirography, — I wonder if Charlotte, in her trippings to the fairyland, has ever met the donor, — a walnut witch, flannel tomato, agate heart, — hard, like mine, as a nether millstone, — and a porcelain pear; that's for an eatable."

"Wondrous gifts, and yet well befitting the time and place they were found," said Charlotte; "but Evaleen will be more likely to unravel, not your stocking, but its mysteries, than myself."

Evaleen blushed. "Charlotte is far more *bewitching* than I; and far more *au fait* to the fays. She must not try to drive you from the first scent."

"She cannot drive me from this last," said Ben, sniffing over the fragrant coffee; "but, cousin Lottie, was it thou? If so, I enjoin upon thee, for pains and penalties, to mend the holes said wonderments have made."

"He made them himself," exclaimed Phil; "and there I lay smothering with laughter to see him shake his stocking with his finger ends, as though he thought 'three blind mice' had missed their way, and taken refuge there, though all the *corns* were gone. I verily believe he picked a

hole in the toe with his penknife ere he ventured to investigate in any more incautious way."

"Bravo! well done, Phil," said Ben; "I see you can beat any one of us telling a story, and I hope we shall be favored with one this evening; to test your imagination, it is not to have the slightest foundation in fact."

"Ah, that is Ellen's perquisite. She is to have one, if any body does, though I did not promise, as Charlotte did. But give me time to prepare, and I will see what I can do," said Phil.

"You need none. Your impromptu efforts are incomparable," returned Ben.

"We are to have a sleigh ride after breakfast; then comes dinner; and then Ellen, Katie, Charlotte, & Co., with their story."

"I promised the children a moss rose for to-night, and have only been able to prepare one from black ink and white paper," said Charlotte.

"With the help of your obedient genii, I doubt not it will bloom most gracefully," said Ben.

"A story?" asked Ellen, with her soft blue eyes growing larger and brighter.

"A fairy legend," returned Charlotte.

"Then mine shall betake itself to the deepest dungeons of my brain," rejoined Phil. "Make way always for the ladies."

"We will have yours to-morrow night," said Evaleen.

"And Ben shall give us one the next evening," said Phil. "But first, Fred, let's know what St Nicholas stored away in your lower casement."

"Why, have I at last a call to speak unto you? Well, then, my foot early scraped acquaintance with a funny little volume of '*Romances from the German*,' probably left there by some Madame Teufalsdrocht, in a fit of absent-mindedness, as with a truly vrow-like intent she took up the article to darn it."

"And he darned it, too, the profane wretch," said Ben, "when he saw how he had 'got his foot in' it. Didn't you think that I was on the watch?"

"Well, if he has '*got his foot in*,'" said Phil, "there is nothing now for him but to 'stump it.' And I propose, as there are six great giants of us here, to say nothing of the pygmies, that we do something towards making ourselves happy, and other folks too, if we can. Now, cousin Lottie, you shall commence the order of exercises, according to promise, and we'll follow after; each, if not on Pegasus, yet, according to his or her ability, on little jack-nag. It is too bad that you, and aunt, and uncle should have all the burden of entertaining such a mass of humanity."

"Well said. See us twelve grown-up folks — see Fred and Evaleen stretch their necks till they are two inches taller therefor. Yes, I move

that each of us tell a fairy story, wizard story, ghost story, or some sort of a story, that shall outdo Peter Rugg, De la Motte Fouqué, Princess Scherezaide of the many nights, and ——"

"Easier said than done," rejoined Phil; "yet I second that motion. Let's put it to vote."

"Please, mamma, put up your hand; and, papa, do let me help lift yours. Yes, all up," said Katie, jumping with glee.

"It is a unanimous vote," said Ben.

"Will the stories all have morals?" asked Ellen, timidly.

"Mine wont, I'll be bound," said Ben.

"O, I'm glad; I always forget the morals," returned Katie; "don't you, Ellen?"

"I try hard to remember them, because that is what they are written for."

"What a bore these morals are!" said Ben.

"What for does a body want a fairy to come and teach a child to knit her stockings, and study her spellings?"

"I wish one would come to teach me," answered Ellen, with a vision floating before her eyes of slates and text books veiled in gossamer, and glorified with brightness.

"Is there a moral in your story, Lottie?" asked Katie.

"I believe not," replied Charlotte, slowly; "to be sure, there is a lesson — no, not a lesson,

but a truth — no, it is'nt that — but there is a — a — thought in it."

"Bravo!" shouted Ben; "our modest Charlotte pleading guilty to a thought; and the jury will unanimously agree in their verdict."

Charlotte laughed and blushed.

"Charlotte is right," said Phil; "every good story must be founded upon some truth, or idea, upon which depends not only its value, but its interest."

"*Value and interest!*" sneered Ben; "quite a mercantile way of expressing yourself. Your story doubtless will commence thus: 'As Abdallah, a merchant of Bagdad, was counting up his gains, he saw arise from the casket ——"

"No, no," interrupted Phil; "I will tell as nonsensical a story as any one of you. We all understand this matter. We are to have a sociable, chatty variety in our entertainments — some *tongue* to sandwich with our whist; and something we can enjoy with Katie and Ellen besides Chinese puzzles, conversation cards, and German games."

"Verily, thou art a man of understanding," said Ben; "and I stipulate that no one ask for the moral of our stories more than for the moral of 'Midsummer Night's Dream' or 'Little Red Riding Hood.'"

"Yet there is, in most fairy tales, a lesson, or

a truth, or an idea, as Charlotte has it," added her mother. "The 'Arabian Nights' are not without their teachings; and, could we trace all these fables back to their primary sources, we should find them issue thence as truths. I have sometimes thought I could find the whole lesson of life in the story of 'The Talking Bird, The Singing Tree, and the Golden Water.'"

"O, tell it, mamma!" said Katie. "Please tell it!" echoed Ellen.

"Not until it comes my turn."

"Aunt must not be excused from an original tale," said Phil. "And now, my little talking bird, quick, get your things, for the sleigh is ready."

"But stop!" said Ben. "Am I to be alone, like Rousseau and Lamartine, in my 'confessions.' Let's hear what Sophy and Eva, Lottie, Katie, aunts and uncles have found in their stockings."

"Mine are fuller now than they were last night, though 'a world too wide for my shrunk shank,'" said uncle Charley, stamping with his boots. "And so are mine," "And mine," "And mine," echoed around the room.

"Ah, Ben, you are a privileged character," said Charlotte, shaking her head.

"You are the rogue, the witch!"

"No, no; but please find my gloves, and hand my muff and tippet. Thank you, Ben."

"Stop, stop, here. Let's not start away until this matter is all settled," said Ben. "There are but ten of us, grown-up folks; that is, by courtesy assuming that we are grown up, especially Fred and Sophy. Only ten, including Dr. Charley and aunt Mary, who will have gay visions, as this is their honeymoon."

Aunt Mary reddened. "I never told a story in my life."

"Tell that to the marines! no, I mean to Mrs. Opie. But you and uncle Charley *must* be happy too. But who, I ask, are our eleventh and twelfth?"

"Isn't it Ellen and me?" asked Katie, archly. Her mother laughed, and shook her head.

"There's Biddie and Aleck! the one from the land of cakes and spectres; the other from that of bogs and bogles," said Phil.

"And arn't they GROWN UP?" continued Ben, as Aleck's gaunt form appeared with the horses before the window. "See him there, like the city of Washington, 'a place of magnificent distances.' Then there's Biddie — not so spacious, but so tightly packed as to rival him in solid substance."

"But neither Biddie nor Aleck will tell a story before company," said Charlotte.

"Then they must deliver themselves in private confession to me," said Phil, "and I will trans-

mute the diamond in the rough to the shining Kohinoor."

"I move," said Ben, "that Charlotte be confessor to Biddie, while Phil sounds Aleck She will get the best story, I'll warrant."

"I will try," replied Charlotte, "and all shall have the benefit of the Hibernian revelation."

"Don't be too sure that it will excel Aleck's and mine. I'll wait till the last," said Phil.

"Better give the valedictory to the lady!" said uncle Charles.

"Aleck is slower than Biddie," replied Phil. "It is the distinctive of his race."

"And sex!" chimed in aunt Mary, archly.

"Whoorah! whoorah!" shouted Ben. "Now we're ready! horses, children, and all. Here, Katie, give a jump! That's right. Got your mittens, Ellen, and all your fixings? Eva's muff will do for both of us! Whoorah!"

Evening First.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT HAZELNOOK.

"Now came still evening on," said Ben, as the tea tray was removed, and they severally arranged themselves around the glowing grate and illuminated table.

"But the successor to such a noisy day!" was the rejoinder of his aunt.

"O, aunt, do forgive us! for we funded all the racket into one of the shortest days in the whole year; and now we will sit with our hands folded in our laps so very quietly. Come, Katie, here's a seat for you!" But Katie had nestled to her father's feet, and Ellen stole softly to her brother's arms.

"Now, where is our Moss Rose?"

"Here is mine," said Evaleen, bringing forward a half-opened bud of surpassing beauty and fragrance.

"O cousin Eva, where did you get it?"

"That is my wonderful tale to tell, when the doomsday, or night of doom, comes to me. Meantime here is Charlotte, with a roll of French

paper, tied with blue ribbon. Now for her moss rose!"

"I said I promised a moss rose, but not that I had it; did I? That this is a fairy legend — a tradition, did I not? It was Katie called it a moss rose."

"Isn't it about a rose? Isn't a moss rose in it?"

"Yes, yes. You shall now see, or rather hear, of Moss AND ROSE, or

THE FAIRY BRIDAL.

Queen Flora met her fairy train, one bright midsummer night, where, on a soft, smooth lawn, they held gay festival. There was dance, like the waltzing of quick waters; and song, like the chiming of crystal bells.

There was sport and mirth, and many a wondrous tale; but, when the moon grew pale, and a clear ray shot up in the east, they drew to a close their revelry.

"And when we meet again," said Flora, "we will have, what we have not had to-night — a bridal!"

There was a sound of many voices, from the fairy troop, like the sweet songs of birds, rising from thick forests, with the music of innumerable leaves. And the chorus was — "Who? who? who shall be the married ones?"

"Decide that for yourselves," said Queen Flora. "Who will be our first bridegroom?" and she turned to the tall Cardinal Flower, in his rich crimson robes, as though he could best answer that question.

But the Cardinal turned still more red, as though at an indignity, and intimated that any

one of his vocation might better spend his time than by devoting it to one fairy. Young Marigold lifted his tasselled cap, and stood, tall as could, in his plush habit of gay maroon; but he could not make up his mind to speak, and only cast a meaning glance at the sweet-breathed Pink, which she returned by a fragrant sigh. Nasturtion fluttered his rich-hued banners, and looked at all the loveliest flower fairies, as though if he could wed the whole in one it would make him still happier. Sweet Pea lifted her thin wings in response, as though she felt that there must be a particular affinity between them; but Nasturtion only smiled benignantly on all. Bachelor held up his button, to remind them of his sworn celibacy; and Sweet William did not know how to choose one, and break the hearts of all the rest of his admirers. Cactus bristled with dismay. The queen, who had noted this, began to doubt whether she should find a groom for her marriage festival; but just then Moss stepped forward in his green velvet jerkin, with his scarlet cockade in a stout olive-colored cap, and altogether quite a stiff bristling appearance, spite of his well-known good nature. Indeed he looked as though he thought it would be a fighting affair, after all, spite of the evident reluctance to accept the queen's challenge, and he stood ready

for any one of them, or for any thing. Flora smiled lovingly, for Moss was a great favorite with her, though he was not so grand as the Cardinal, nor so beautiful as Nasturtion, nor so much admired as Sweet William. But the little fairies all laughed. They did not appreciate Moss, and considered him *decidedly green.* Though an old acquaintance, they only thought of him as an impudent little fellow, forever intruding himself upon their circles, running about in all manner of out-of-the-way places, and they complained that he was *forever under foot.*

"And who shall be your bride?" said the smiling queen, not heeding the sneers of many. Moss was puzzled for an instant. There was Violet, his old friend, with whom he had so often nestled at the roots of old trees, whom he had clasped to his heart in deep-shaded dells, and under the cool rocks; and he remembered her sweet breath when she rested at his side, or closed her blue eye on his bosom. That deep eye was half lifted to him now, but it gently dropped again, and the breeze brought him a breath of incense. Then he thought of frail Anemone, whom he had embraced so many times, as they met in the woodlands, and who needed his fresh vigor, and cool way of meeting things, to assist her in getting along, or even *holding her own.*

He glanced at her now, so tall, frail, and slender, so graceful and so fair, with the faintest hectic on her pure face, and a tender inclination of her slight form towards him. He looked at the soft wreaths around her trail, and thought how often they had floated over his buskins, and how beautiful she seemed when the wind lifted her head, and the sunlight came down through the tree tops on her delicate brow. But Moss was ambitious; and, spite of his humble dress, cool way, and odd habits, he had, with all his sturdy helpfulness, quite an idea of taking a bride who should help him up in the world, instead of humbly uniting himself to one of the modest companions of his early life. And he said, "I will have Rose!"

O, what a laugh went up! It was like a little whirlwind of sneers; for Rose was Flora's chief favorite, and her attendant every where. She was the acknowledged belle of all the flower fairies, and in every land her supremacy was admitted. She had rested on the brows of queens, and nestled in the bosom of an empress. She was ever first in the garland, and chiefest in the bouquet. But it was no obstacle with Moss that she was universally acknowledged "loveliest, supremest, best." When he heard the taunting laugh, he looked at *her* to see if she joined in the scornful mirth; but her head was

bowed, to hide her blushes and the rich glow that deepened at her heart. There was nothing exclusive in her disposition; she breathed as sweetly on a beggar as on a king, and looked as sweetly on a pallet as on a palace. Like every noble nature, she could appreciate the universal sympathies of Moss, and his general usefulness. Spite of his humble uniform, and the stiff armor in which he sometimes cased himself, she knew how soft was his heart, how invigorating his touch. She could not sneer, nor taunt, and now awaited, while rich odors stole from her open heart, the reply of Queen Flora.

"But, Moss," said the queen, "though you are an adventurous little fellow, and can scramble through the world better than some who have a poor opinion of you, yet you sometimes choose but a rough residence, and a lawless way to spend your time. Now, Rose I would have carefully cherished, and carried to a beauteous home, for she is worthy of all I can bestow on her. She must not be taken into damp caves, nor dragged up into dead trees. The sweetest bird deserves the loveliest cage; the richest jewel should have the most precious ring; the noblest of all my flower fairies deserves the best husband and the most beautiful home."

"I will do all in my power to give her each of them," replied Moss, whose stout heart was not

at all daunted by this disclosure. "Permit me this year to prepare for my loved one!"

"And where will we meet?" asked the queen.

"Do you see," said Moss, pointing his wand towards the bay, "that high rock, by a little creek? There let us meet on next midsummer eve!"

"There let us meet on next midsummer eve!" responded the queen; and "There let us meet on next midsummer eve!" was the response of the whole choir.

Then there was a moving of wings, as when a breeze sweeps through a garden all in bloom, and they disappeared in the red light of morning. Moss stole to Rose ere she was gone, and looked up into her radiant face. There was a light kiss upon his brow, as she bowed still lower, and touched his moist hand; and O, how grateful the dewy incense of her breath!

Then she was no more near him; but he was a happy fellow as he crept to the bank of a rivulet, and lay down to listen to its morning song, and decide upon future operations.

"I have it!" said he at last, and then he clambered up a high rock, and ran all over a precipice, in the exuberance of his glee, and said to himself, "Short as I am, yet who can lift their head so high?"

The next midsummer's eve the fairies met at the old haunt, and went from thence to the place of rendezvous. But they could not find it. There was no rugged outline of bare rocks against the clear sky, and they looked in vain for the spot imprinted on their memories. While flitting pettishly about, they thought they heard a well-known voice, and, looking away, they saw Moss waving his banners, and laughing at them

They flew to him, and the velvet-draped barbacan, from which his signal floated, and there they saw the green altar and level dancing floor "O, what a change was there!" The bald gray rocks were tapestried by Moss, with all his brightest shades of green; the loose sand was carpeted with the vivid tint of springing grass; every hillock was now a soft ottoman, strewn with seed amber, and studded thick with olive shades of raised embroidery. Some dead trees, that leaned their huge antlers towards each other from opposing precipices, were hung thick with tassels of silver, fawn, and brown; and every bough was fringed superbly. Here and there a shaft of stone was crusted with a variegated papyria, and these were interspersed with pyramids and columns, rusted with gold and silver; while the protruding roots of overarching trees were softly cushioned with Moss's most delicate handiwork. Starry spangles of light

pea green gave life to overwrought rugs of a brownish or an olive tint, and filigree scales covered the roughest tablets. The little pool lay in the outer court, beneath the moonbeams, like dancing quicksilver in a fountain rim of emerald; and a long, thick fringe of softest green lined the deep hollow of its basin.

But the altar — that was most beautiful; for every fairy had thrown her tribute there, and it was heaped with fragrant blossoms. Moss's best mosiac vases held Lily's and Orange's fairest blooms, and quiet little Violet nestled at its base, with a dew-drop in her blue eye, whose pencilled lids were drooping, and she was purple with deep emotion. Anemone would have hung her head, but her breezy old wooer reassured her, and lifted it carelessly with his pinions.

And Flora came, wearing her crown of state, where every fairy saw in miniature her flower. and bearing her sceptre, now wreathed by Moss. Close following was the bride of the night, too superb to be lovely, too lovely to be magnificent. The choicest odors floated with her undulating movements, and her breath was like the richest incense of spring. From the depths of her heart came stealing a gentle blush, that irradiated her whole form, and every fairy bent in homage to this beauteous one.

"Truly, Moss, thou hast decorated the hard rocks into a palace worthy of thy bride, thy bridal, and thy queen!" said Flora, as she flitted beneath the fringed arch into the open court, where the fountain glittered. Honeysuckle blew his trumpet, while she marshalled her fairy host, with the Cardinal, to bring up the rear, and she led the bride as Moss headed the procession. They passed through lofty aisles with velvet floorcloth and spangled ceiling, and trellised above with Moss's thickest netting. The moon and starbeams peeped through and played with their radiant wands; and the dewy breeze stole into the passages to ravish the fragrance of the morning blossoms. They passed through a winding way to the little inlet from the sea; but Moss had so planted and disguised its banks, that they were not to be easily recognized. Here was a miniature forest of vegetable coral, and there were shelving precipices, rough coated with gold and silver.

Then they all dipped into the waves, where Moss had collected his most artistic creations They found his copy of every forest tree and garden flower, with many a vague model of wonders not yet substantially wrought out, of things for which there was no likeness in the heaven above or the earth beneath. When they had fairly investigated all the marvels of his sea

album, and trifled with the lightly-laden waves, they passed around through other cool green cloisters, to the altar they had left, and there were no more sneers when Moss doffed his cap, with its red cockade, and, in his plush regimentals, stood before them all to receive his fair Rose from Queen Flora.

Then the fairy train departed, each leaving a sweet tribute behind; and Violet stole last away, while her soft tears perfumed the bridal bed. Rose leaned heavily at first upon her stout young husband, as though her heart was burdened with bliss or woe; but soon she was accustomed to his ways, and loved to stand with him at the green altar or lean against the old trees.

The next year, I wot, that fairy cave was far more beautiful than then, for there were many moss buds playing on the green; and if you would know how beautiful they were, look at the next moss rose you find, and you will think how proud was this fond couple when they presented their offspring to Queen Flora, who said, "These are the choicest creatures of my band."

As Charlotte finished her sketch, she looked to the least of her auditors, to find in brilliant eyes the compliment she most desired — that of children; and Ellen and Katie actually looked as though they could have kept awake through another story. Then she lifted her gaze to her parents, to find in their expression the tribute to a well-done task. They certainly found no fault, and her mother ventured to compliment the story, though she said that to personify flowers was now no original thought. She repeated the pretty lines of "The Angel of Flowers," where the moss is given to the rose as the only thing that can increase its beauty; and she showed them some plates, where a few blossoms are very beautifully transformed into floral women.

Charlotte gazed with interest, but disclaimed any conscious assistance from these sources.

Phil said there were many things so obvious to the poetic eye that one must see them now just as they might have seen them thousands of years ago. He expressed his private conviction that, if the Alexandrian library could be reproduced, without a knowledge of its identity, those old authors would be accused of wanton plagiarism from Milton, Shakspeare, and nobody knows how many more.

Ellen asked what library it was, and her father

told her it was the greatest collection of its time, in Egypt, which had been then considered the university of the world. But it was burned by Mahomet — or some Islamite more bigoted than the author of the Koran ever was himself — because he said that if it contained aught against Mahometanism it ought to be destroyed, and if it did not, it was unnecessary, as it would be but a duplicate account. And he added, that the learned world had never ceased to regret this conflagration.

But Phil rejoined, that the learned world need not make itself so uncomfortable. He did not doubt but the Alexandrian library had been re-written long since, and with this advantage, that a riper generation of authors had employed themselves upon the raw material, and that two sets of writers had enjoyed the blessing of believing themselves the originators of assertions and the discoverers of truths.

But Katie and Ellen fell asleep in the Alexandrian library, and were sent to bed.

Evening Second.

All met around the cheerful table, in sanguine expectation of Phil's story, which had many days before been promised to Ellen, but which she was now to share with all the rest.

He came in with a roll of manuscript four times as large as Lottie's; but Katie, who had snatched a peep at it, said it was written coarse enough for a sign board; so they need not fear it would take them all night to listen to it.

Phil trusted they would not fear any thing in regard to it.

"Except," said Ben, "that it may have pre-appeared in the Alexandrian library."

No; Phil thought they need not even have a fear of that. His *Enchanted Horse* had neither carried him to the heights of Parnassus, nor to the sources of the Nile. He had only emerged from a rough German forest, which was undoubtedly *black* with the darkness of isolation in the time of the Alexandrian library.

"An enchanted horse, from the Black Forest," said Ben. "That sounds promising! Come, let us hear him neigh!"

Phil untied the roll, and settled himself comfortably in a whirligig chair, as Ben called it, because its seat turned on a pivot; and, while attending to these secondary matters, he was somewhat disturbed by some "ill-bred whinnering," as he called it, which was going on in Ben and Fred's department of the group.

He would not have minded it, but that the business was so new to him; and he had a dread of Ben's ridicule that he did not like to acknowledge. However, he dropped his scowl, and began.

THE ENCHANTED HORSE.

Old Casper was a cotter, who for years had been known on all the wharves, in all the streets, and over the market square of the city. His little cot was in the outskirts, where lived Jost, his faithful wife, and their children. Old Casper must have married late in life, or else hard labor had made him old; for he looked as if he might be the grandfather of the little ragged boys who played around his cottage door, and ran to meet him at the eventide. And in the square, on the wharves, and through the streets, they only knew him as "Old Casper" — "Cotter Casper," who seemed never to have been young within the remembrance of any inhabitant. He walked with a trembling step, because his knees had so often tottered beneath the heavy loads he bore upon his back, his shoulders, or his head. His skin was withered and wrinkled by the winds and rain, in which he waited for odd jobs and burdens to carry. His garments were patched and threadbare, because he had not money enough to purchase new ones. And these old clothes gave him a very ancient look. The repeated patches on his knees gave them the

appearance of two hard, gnarled knots on a forest stump; and the old brown suit looked, all together, with its shreds and mendings, like the scaly bark of an old tree. But Casper was faithful abroad, and kind at home. His neighbors, and his neighbors' dogs and hens, loved him and his children. The birds built their nests on the eaves and in the chimney of his hut, and the stray goats browsed to his very doorstep. If he ever had a spare crust, he knew where was a dog that would be glad to eat it; and, when he found a handful of hayseed in his pocket, he knew of the bird who would sing all the sweeter after he had put it on the window sill.

One evening, as Old Casper returned through the square from his day's labors, he saw a poor old horse standing in the market, as if waiting for a purchaser. He looked as though he might have waited long, and might wait still longer. He was a very *sorry* looking horse, in every sense of the word. One could count every rib in his body, and his back was like a saw. His spindle shanks were bald, save the coarse tufts upon the joints; and his rough, flaky hoofs looked as though they would crumble to pieces. There was a little hair on his mouth, like coarse ice needles. His hide was the color of a singed blanket; he held his head to the ground, as though he would feign snuff some sustenance

from the stone pavement, or as though he had the sense to be ashamed of his ill looks. Old Casper pitied him, and stroked his back gently.

"Will no one buy him?" said he to the man who held him by the halter.

"I have not had an offer to-day," replied the man, savagely.

"Poor fellow!" said Casper to the horse; and he stroked him again, very softly.

The gaunt beast looked up, beseechingly, as though he would say, "Do buy me!" Casper shook his head, and turned away; and he felt sorely self-condemned when he looked back a moment after, and saw how the poor brute had dropped his nose to the ground again, as though a fresh disappointment had been added to his sorrows. Casper choked down the self-rebuke, and walked on, thinking how glad he would be of such a horse. "My back is weak," said he, "and almost broken. I cannot carry a heavy chest, or a large sack, as once I could, nor run with parcels when there is need of haste. Now, if I had a horse and little cart, he could carry all the burdens, and I would guide him. I would like to buy that horse; for the man will beat if he cannot sell him, and I am sure no one but me will take him away. He is very bad looking, to be sure, but so much the better for me; for what would I do with a fine horse? and how

could I keep him sleek and hearty? I cannot buy one, and if one were given me, they all would think Old Casper had turned thief, and stolen him. Heigh-ho! how I wish I could sell something and buy this creature!" Then his thoughts ran over all his possessions. It was a short race, for they were few; and there was nothing he could spare.

He came in sight of his hut, but no one ran to meet him, nor was Jost looking from the window. "And yet I am late!" said he to himself, as he mended his pace and shuffled on. When he reached home, he found Jost seated by the hearth, with a strange child upon her lap, and the children were gathered around her. "I found it crying at the door," said she, "when I came home from gleaning, and none of the neighbors knew whence it came, or who left it here. But the children love it, already."

"Poor thing, it is hungry," said Casper, as he heard its first wail. "Is there nothing for it to eat?"

"It shall have my supper!" said Gottfried. "And mine!" said Wilhelm. "And mine!" said little Alvin. Little Bertha could not talk, but she crept to her mother, clambered to her knee, and, parting the kerchief on her neck, patted the full bosom with her little hands, as if to say, "And mine, too!" Then she smiled sweetly, and wound her soft arms around the little stranger.

"He shall have mine," said Casper; and he drew his cuffless sleeve across his eye; "I want none to-night." So he took a basin, and filled it with warm milk and water, and soaked bread therein, and fed the child, while Jost nursed Bertha and gave the boys their bread and water. When her baby's eyes were closed in sleep, she took her from her breast, and the blue milk trickled into her lap. "There is some left for the little stranger," said she; and she took him from Casper. But the child shook his head, and would not take the remnant of Bertha's supper.

The little boys came and kissed the hands of their parents, when it was time to go to rest, and they asked if they might kiss the strange baby. Jost and Casper let them kiss the child; and then Casper took him, washed him, put on a clean frock that was Alvin's, and laid down with him beside Jost and Bertha.

"We will not send him to the *armenhaus*, for they do not know how to nurse babies there," said Casper; "they always die; and we must not kill this little boy." Just then the moonbeams came through the window and lighted up Old Casper's face, so that it was white and beautiful. It sparkled too on the ring which hung around the neck of the foundling. "This is very bright," said he; "perhaps I can sell it, and get a great deal of money." But then the

light faded from the ring, and he could not see it in the darkness.

When the sun arose Casper rose too, and ate his breakfast of bread and broth. "I have left some for the new baby," said he to Jost, as she took the children from their bed. "We will call him Leopold, for it is a king's name;" and he gave him a hearty morning kiss. Just then he saw the ring shining very brightly.

"I will sell it," said he; and he snatched it from the child's neck, and hurried to the market. When the jewellers opened their shops, he took the ring from his pocket, and offered it for sale. But no one would buy it, for the light had all died out of the stone, and the setting was dull and tarnished.

So he hastened back to the wharves; "for," said he, "I have one more now to work for, and I have lost all the morning." He labored very hard, and only bought a small loaf for his dinner, which he ate, while the sweat from his face dropped upon the pavement. When it was night he hurried home, for he wished to know how Jost got along, and hoped the new child had not been troublesome. As he crossed the market, he saw the same gruff man, and the same rough horse, who had been there the night before. He was again so thoughtless as to pity the horse, and stroke his shaggy mane; and again

the brute raised his head, with a piteous neigh, as if to say, "Do take me home with you."

"There is one new one there already," said Casper to himself; and that reminded him of the ring, which he took from his pocket. It glittered very brightly, and the horse dealer looked at it with wonder. "Can we trade," said Casper, "with the horse and the ring?"

"I will give you the horse, and money enough to buy a cart, and a rack full of grain," said the man, "if you will give me the ring."

"It is a bargain," replied Casper; and he gave the man the ring, and took the halter.

"Come, Mynheer," said he to his horse, for he did not know what else to call him. But the horse knew who was meant, and followed as fast as he could. Casper wished to hurry, for he was afraid the light would fade again from the ring, and that the horse dealer would not abide by the bargain. He peeped back, but the man was not there; nor could he see him in all the square, nor in the turnings of the streets. Yet he did not stop to wonder, but, pulling the horse along, again he cried, "Come, Mynheer." The horse passed slowly through the streets, and every body laughed at Casper and his new possession. But somehow they were at home sooner than he thought to be, and the children came to meet him, leading little Leopold. They

al. stroked Mynheer, as their father called him, and asked if he would eat some of their supper.

"I will get him some grain," said Casper; "and then he will grow strong and heavy."

"But he will never be a beauty," thought Gottfried, as he turned away to little Bertha, "like my sweet little sister; nor so good looking as Leopold, who is all the better for a day's life with civil people."

The little stranger's face was shining with happiness, and he seemed to feel among his kindred with the children of Casper.

A stable was fitted up for Mynheer of some loose boards; and, until it was finished, the horse slept under the window, and ate from their hands in the doorway. He loved best that little Leopold should feed him, and took kindly to the boy.

Casper bought his little cart, and then he commenced life anew in the crowded thoroughfare.

There was, to Casper, something very wonderful about his horse. He seemed not strong yet his strength never failed. He would never hurry, yet he was never too late. He walked with an uncertain step, yet he never stumbled. Though the worst-looking, he was the best-behaved horse in the city. Men laughed at him, and said, "Old Casper's horse looks as though he were his child." "Ay," said the old man,

when he overheard it, "if they could only see my Bertha!" But the fine qualities of Mynheer were in time appreciated; and when the good wives wanted water brought, or milk carried, they sought for Casper and his sure-footed horse. He was never too late for the postman, nor too early for his master. Nor did his patience and good temper ever fail.

Casper never struck him, nor gave him a cross word. Though never brisk in the morning, he was never tired at night. He took his last load as freely as his first, and stopped at the appointed signal with no impatience. In time, Casper put heavier loads upon the cart, and piled it high with heterogeneous freight; but Mynheer never minded that. And the creature seemed so well and cheery at night that once he set off with him to the marsh for loam, to make a garden out of the sand plat in the rear of his house. The twilight was long then, and Mynheer brought it home before it was dark, and went again. So they did the next night, and the next; and when it was Sunday, Casper was himself astonished at his rich ground. He wondered that Mynheer could have brought so much. Then he got seeds, and planted them, and they grew finely. One eve he took his cart and went for some bulbs and plants, that they might have flowers. Mynheer shook the cart, and scattered some of

tne roots ere they reached home. "Naughty Mynheer." said Casper, laughingly; but when the bit was out of his mouth, he ran back quite nimbly, and brought them home in his mouth. Those roots grew very large and lovely; and when they blossomed people came to admire their novel beauty. After this the ladies came often to Jost for her beauteous flowers, for bridal wreaths and opera bouquets; and though she gave them many, her own garden bed was always blooming.

"Mynheer seems never tired," said Jost one evening, as he came home in the early twilight, drawing the cart after Casper. "Why should I not have some good of him, as well as others? I will have a ride!"

So she got upon his back, which, sharp as it was, seemed to accommodate itself to her wonderfully as a seat, even like a soft pillion; and she rode through the lane, by the brewery, up to the bleaching green, and came back in high spirits. The little boys laughed at her, even Leopold, who wanted to give the horse his supper, and Bertha clapped her baby hands in sympathy with the rest.

"What a good horse!" exclaimed Casper to himself. "Now that he is known so well, I can sell him for a purse full of gold." Mynheer had brought him many a lucky kreuzer; but a

purse full of gold to hold in his hand all at once — this was the brightest vision of Casper. So he took him to the market one day, and stood with the herdsmen and jockeys, with Mynheer for sale.

It was not long before a farmer came by who knew of all his patience, and strength, and docility. He counted out a small purse for Casper, and said he would give him that for the horse, for he was wanting a strong creature to get marl and loam, and bring lime from the pit. Casper found he could do no better; so he exchanged the horse for the purse, and went home. But when he put his hand into his pocket to get the purse for Jost to look at, it was not there. He searched every fold of his old coat and breeches; but it was surely gone. His spirits were not raised by his wife's reproaches, nor the tears of the children, who cried for Mynheer. Leopold wept all night, so that he was sick next day; and when Casper went to his morning's work, he left him with his face all flushed with fever.

He went to his old haunt on the wharves, and again took burdens on his head and back.

"I have had a nice long rest," said he to himself, "and am now grown strong and tough. I look so much better, that men will call me *Young Casper*, and think I am son to Jost."

Thus he strove to keep up good heart, and

earn his living as before; but it was a hard and heavy day's work for him. When he went home his boys met him in silence, and Leopold sat moping on the wooden steps, with Bertha looking at him silently. She kissed her father, and then stole to the boy again, with her quiet sympathy. By and by they heard some uneven, well-known steps, and Casper looked up from the bacon and greens he was striving to eat, and then he jumped like a monkey; for Mynheer put his wrinkled nose in at the doorway, as if he had his usual right to be there. The farmer came blustering after him, and swore — for he was in a great passion — that *he wash a teufel of a peast, and he shoot haf no more to too mit him.*

"*Sho let me haf mine colt akain, ant you shall haf te Peelsepup of a 'orse!*" Yes, it was true; Mynheer had kicked a new cart into flinders, beat down the stable door with one blow of his hoof, made splinters of his rack, and snapped his teeth at his new master. Yet there he was, like a masterly hypocrite, looking as peaceable as a priest, and as naïve as a nun.

"But I cannot return your gold," said Casper, "I have lost it!" Then the farmer raved again, and would not believe one word he said, and told him *he ant his peast were two teufels, and shoot pe purnt in a vire.*

Casper put his hand in his pocket, to prove

its collapsed state, and lo, there was the purse, just as he had put it in the night before.

He gave it to the farmer, who counted it, and, finding it all right, took his departure. Then the children rejoiced over Mynheer, and crowned him with their beautiful flowers.

Casper went again to the wharves with his horse and cart, and Mynheer was docile as before. But Jost had not forgotten her ride, and she said, "Now Mynheer has come home again, I will have some good of him too; and on Michaelmas day I will have a ride in the park." There was a rich *schneider*, who often had flowers of Jost, and she went to him and said, "If you will make me a fine riding habit, and hat with plumes, I will give you my choice plants." "I will," said the *schneider;* for he thought, "How fine they will look in my front shop windows!"

So he furnished Jost with the riding suit throughout, and received, in return, the plants, all taken up by the roots, but one little offshoot that wilted in the ground when the parent stems were taken away.

The children felt very sad when the plants were gone, and Leopold went to the forlorn one in the garden, and sat and cried over it. His hot tears seemed to revive it, like a soft shower, and the pure petals opened with new beauty

He pressed the earth around the roots, and again it flourished, and the wonderful flowers were the pride of old Casper's garden once more.

But they ever seemed, to Jost, to look at her reproachfully.

When came Michaelmas day, she mounted her horse, arrayed in her fine hat and plumes, and gay dress, with her whip in her hand, and set off when the streets and park were full of people. "They will see riding to-day," said Jost; and in truth they did. Mynheer poked through the streets in his most ungainly manner, and though Jost threshed him until her arm was lame, it did no good. His hide seemed made of iron, nor did he mind her threats or scoldings. All at once he flung his heels into the air, and set off like a bullet from a gun. Jost dropped her whip and clung to his neck, for she saw he meant to throw her. "Stop him!" she screamed; but no one dared, for his mouth was covered with froth, and his eyes glowed like two coals of fire. He raced all over the park like a whirligig, and finally ended his capers by throwing Jost completely over his head, upon the embankment. The good woman thought she must surely be dead, but she was not even hurt, only terribly frightened, and her new riding dress completely spoiled.

She picked herself up, and went home very

much mortified; and Mynheer followed quietly as though he had but a dim remembrance of what had happened. But Jost never attempted equestrian feats again.

Time passed on, and Mynheer labored still, gaining for Casper many a penny, so that he sent his children to school, and furnished his cottage comfortably. His little garden was the most flourishing bit of ground in the suburb, and no one else had vegetables so good in eating. But, when years had passed, Casper grew tired of the wharves; and he thought again, "I will sell the horse, and get money for a shop."

Mynheer had not waxed old nor feeble, and there was a merchant who said he would buy him for his country seat, where he was just retiring. He had not heard of Mynheer's misdemeanors with his former purchaser; and Casper, like a prudent man, knew how to hold his peace.

He kept the money fast in his hand when it was paid him, and went to a shopkeeper, saying, "I will give you this for your shop and fixtures." "It is a bargain," was the man's reply; for he had been wanting to sell out.

So Casper was shortly instated in his shop, and he ranged the goods in the windows, and fitted up the shelves anew, and made himself very busy, though he worked with his holiday suit on. But nothing went right. He gave

good money, and always took bad change. His books were always wrong, and his goods were ever damaged. Still he persevered; for he thought to himself, "It is want of experience, and I will guard against so many blunders." But there was no use in trying. His little substance wasted, and he saw nothing before him but to go again to the wharves.

One day, he sat gloomily looking at his empty bales and boxes, when the merchant came in, who bought Mynheer, saying, "I have brought your fiend of a horse back again, and wish I had done it before, for he has made me a poor man." Then he went on to tell of the ruin he had wrought, and how he had kept him that he might break his cursed spirit or his neck, but he could do neither. "I will take the horse," said Casper, "but I have nothing to give in return but this shop, which you may have in welcome." So the merchant took the shop, and sold his farm house to replenish it, after which he did well. And Casper went home, leading his peaceable horse with a joyful heart.

How glad were the boys to see him again; and the sunshine broke over the dark furrows of Jost's countenance. Little Bertha leaped to Mynheer's neck, and mingled her pretty curls with his rough mane. But Leopold was wholly another being. The color came to his wasted

cheeks like the rosy light to a morning cloud and the nightmare, which he said had been so long upon him, as well in the day as through the night, had wholly passed away. He grew fat and happy, and they were a flourishing household once more.

When Gottfried had grown tall, he wished to go on his apprentice travels, and his father made for him a little purse when he went away. And thus he did by Wilhelm and by Alvin; but Leopold never asked to leave him. The young man took a piece of ground near by and cultivated it, for he was soon the best farmer in the neighborhood. He still lived at the old cottage, for there were two attractions there — *Mynheer* and BERTHA. Casper's daughter was beautiful as her mother's other rare flowers, and he could have wedded her to many a richer man; but she loved Leopold. So the parents betrothed her to the foundling, and their home was made happy by the light hearts of the young lovers.

One day, when Casper was, as usual, at the wharves, some men came in a boat to the landing, and said, "Where is the faithful man who will take this heavy chest to the wharf at the other side of the city?"

"That is a job for Casper," said one, and he stepped forward to offer his services. It took many stout men to lift the chest from the boat

to the cart, but Mynheer set off very composedly with his load. The men went round in the boat, but Casper took the short road through the streets. Mynheer went on very well until he came to a certain turning that went up to the heart of the city, and then he set off in the wrong direction, as if a fiend possessed him. It was all in vain that Casper shouted and ran. No one could stop him, and he ran on till he came to the *gerichtshause*. Then he stopped so violently that he upset the cart, threw out the chest, and shattered its iron bands so that the gold and silver therein dropped out upon the pavement. There had been great robberies of late, and Casper thought, "Surely this is the stolen money!" So he picked it up in his hat, and leaving Mynheer to guard the chest, he sought the *Amthouse* and told his story. The money was examined and identified. The chest was searched, and all its stolen contents were revealed.

The judge sent officers with Casper to seize the robbers; and the empty chest was placed upon the cart, which Mynheer dragged along like a feeble donkey. When they came to the wharf Mynheer sweat profusely, and hung his head, as though he were ready to sink from exhaustion. This deceived the men, so that they did not mind the officers till they leaped into the boat and secured them every one for justice.

The money was all returned to the losers

each of whom gave back a goodly portion to Casper, so that he was now a wealthy man. And the judge gave him a noble medal, as a memorial of his honesty, though Casper thought it belonged more to Mynheer than to him.

He built him a pleasant house on the site of the old hut, which he pulled down, and sent valuable gifts to his three sons. All the rest he gave to Leopold and Bertha, who were to be wedded when their new mansion was finished.

They did not forget accommodations for Mynheer, who should be lodged, as Leopold said, as never a horse was lodged before. They made him a marble stable, with a silver rack, and they *installed* him there on the night of the marriage festival.

Old Casper left the bridal party enjoying their fine fruits and wondrous flowers, to give Mynheer his supper and lock the stable door, that none of the inquisitive company might disturb him.

In the morning they all crowded around the bride and bridegroom to wish them joy, and to know what they had dreamed during the first sleep in their new house.

"I dreamed," said Leopold, "that I saw a noble lady rush, like a lunatic, from a stately palace, and wander with a child in her arms, through fields and forests. Sometimes she kissed it tenderly, and anon she held it above some

pool or stream, as if she would fling it in. An instinct, stronger than she could resist, restrained her, and again she wandered on. At last she sunk at the foot of a tree and breathed no more A lady, all in waving robes of green, with a starry crown upon her brow, rose from the violet bank and took the child; and I saw no more. What did you dream, my Bertha?"

"I saw a poor old horse come from the woodland, wearily carrying a child upon his back, which, when he had knelt gently, he dropped off at my father's door. Then he went and stood in the market." "It was Mynheer!" said they all; and they went to the stable to give him his breakfast. But when the door was unlocked they found the stable empty. Mynheer had disappeared, they knew forever. But in the corner there glittered a ring. Casper picked it up, and said to Leopold, "It is thine!" "And all mine is thine," said he to Bertha, and took her hand to place it on her finger. As he did so they saw, for the first time, these words engraven there: "THE REWARD OF KINDNESS."

Phil finished his tale to an attentive audience; and even Ben found no fault with the horse, or the way in which he had trudged his way through the story.

Katie asked if it were "fair to have any German words in it;" and Phil replied there were none but such as were easily interpreted by the context. Their father thought the Dutch way of pronouncing one or two sentences was not consistent with the rest of the story. Either the tale should be good German, or German well translated into good English.

Phil pleaded guilty to the barbarism, but apologized by saying, that, while writing, he only thought how the old fellow would have scolded if we could but have heard him.

Charlotte thought Phil was right; that a better idea was given of the disappointed old Dutchman than if he had scolded in good or bad English: but her father still persisted that Phil was *incorrect;* and Phil wished only to be correct in giving a correct idea of what he wanted to portray.

But while he took off his spectacles, and rubbed them as if to clear his vision for a glance into the rhetorical region of tropes, similes, allegories, &c., in which writers were so wont to become lost, each of which he insisted should be perfect in its way, and while Phil was resettling himself for a long dissertation upon this subject of correct word painting, that might have been so much more useful before he wrote the story, a yawn from Ellen was observed by their mother, and was noticed as a signal for breaking up the circle.

Evening Third.

The young folks had been kept in doors all day by a heavy snow storm. There had been many querulous complaints, and a hint or two that the clerk of the weather held an office that might be better bestowed on another. But Ben had looked remarkably complacent throughout, not only, as Sophy said, because it was his day for writing, and it was easier to keep in doors of a stormy than a pleasant day, but he verily appeared, she thought, as if new ideas came with the fresh snowflakes; and she believed they might depend upon something specially prepared for the occasion.

This announcement had inspired a peculiar interest and curiosity; and Ben found a waiting audience when he entered the parlor with his manuscript doubled up in his pocket. Ben was not bashful, nor was he *very* conceited. He well knew there was, with the desire to hear a good story, a great willingness, in one or two directions, to criticize a poor one.

Fred was drawing down the corners of his mouth, and brushing up his hair, and staring out his eyes, to look as Sophy said, like Frank in

the story book, when he was to listen to his cousin's Latin theme; and Ben feared "the best of his story might be Latin to the present august critic;" a sarcasm which Fred well understood to be aimed at some very imperfect school recitations of his own.

"Then gently *scan* your brother man," continued Ben; a caution that by no means helped him to recover his equilibrium. Ben's usual self-assurance returned as he took his chair and drew the light towards him; and Fred resumed his, as he then found opportunities to make great eyes at the reader.

"Now open your ears and mental eyes," said the reader, "to hear my story of OLD BARTRAND; or, THE CLERK OF THE WEATHER."

THE CLERK OF THE WEATHER.

Old Bartrand grumbled at the wet and at the drought; at the long, cloudy days, and at the weeks of clear hot sunshine. The weather never suited him, and it was his custom to say that if it were left to his arrangement he could save a deal of trouble. "The clerk of the weather!" that personage was a perfect bugbear to him; and one would have thought, to hear old Bartrand, that this busy being was the most capricious, malicious, and suspicious person in the universe.

"No customers ever in my shop," grumbled old Bartrand; "how should there ever be any? The mud has been ankle deep at the crossing, and no sunshine this sevennight. No, nor moonshine either, for that matter, unless this whole business is moonshine at the bottom. Well, if I could only get hold of 'the clerk of the weather,' I would teach him how he might improve matters. A lesson or so from somebody of common sense might work wonders in him.

"Ah, Bartrand, why were you not put into authority, where there is so much need of it?"

This was his way of grumbling; and if he did

not always do it aloud, yet such thoughts were ever in his heart.

"Ah, if I could only break a path through those clouds, so that the sun might roll on, like a clean wheel over a smooth highway;" and he wiped the imagined sweat from his brow, as though he were at the useful task of "inspector of roads" in the troubled region above, or busy with his own spade amidst the black drifts.

And suddenly there came to him, from the heart of the thick mist, a stranger of wondrous beauty. He was tall, straight, and vigorous, like a pure, shapely statue. Soft golden locks clustered around his open, generous brow, while the noble majesty of his figure, the sweet grace of his smile, combined to awe and attract the beholder. His large wings, from which he shook the mist like diamond drops, were transparent as those of the silver fly; but light and shade went undulating through them, and shadows, like those of swollen rills, and exuberant forests, and flowery dells, were painted there as on a bubble. He waved a wand as it were of twisted sunbeams, and a circlet of light came all around him from the shadow.

"And so thou dost not like my ways?" said he to Bartrand.

"How should I do that, or otherwise?" answered he, reverently, "for, trust my senses, I never have seen thee in my life before."

"Ah, but in my works I am known to thee, for, Bartrand, I am that awkward, usurping fellow, whose ignorance causes such dire mischief in this world of yours. I am THE CLERK OF THE WEATHER!"

"And, troth, if the weather would be but as fair and shining as your own bright face, it would be a black and lying tongue that ever spoke ill of the same," answered Bartrand, with Milesian fervor.

The stranger laughed. "Well, Bartrand," said he at length, "let me see your books — your leger and your day book."

"As clane of debt or credit as e'er a high pasture of green grass," answered Bartrand, lugging them along.

"Well kept, and all in order," said the vision, as he radiated over them.

"But, Bartrand, you should not complain of me because you have not more trade."

"Ah, but the rain and the mud," replied Bartrand, with a brow lowering like the cloud overshadowing his ridgepole. "How will the people come out when it is thus?"

"They will not come, now," rejoined the weather sprite; "but when the rain is over and gone, they will come from their homes like the ants and the bees, and buy for all their wants People do not go shopping as they would go for fresh air, which they must have each day; and

were all days cloudless, there would still be many when the customers should prove few. The sunshine bids them provide for the rain; and, when your labors are light, they are enjoying their provident provisions."

"But might it not be amended just a bit?" asked Bartrand, doubtfully.

"Look here," replied his visitor; "keep, for one year, an exact account of each day's weather, just as it comes, hot or cold, rain or shine. Put it down carefully in your books, as you would keep an account of loss and profit. In one year I will return to look over the account."

"And, please your honor," responded Bartrand, "may I not add the items of what we would like it to be?"

"Not one word of that. But keep strict the memorandum;" and the weather breeder vanished away.

So, for a year, old Bartrand kept the minutes. He took date of barometer, thermometer, but not of the two odd ometers in his head and heart; and when the task was over he said to himself, "Small comfort this to know what weather we have had this twelvemonth past, when so much of it was just the worst that could be sent us."

And then there stood before him in the sunlight of the morning the same bright vision that had haunted him before. With his shining

wand he turned over the account of Bartrand, and then asked him if he would oblige him by keeping the same items one year longer.

"And sure so fine a gentleman as yourself might just oblige me for that same period; and many thanks, though small trouble to yourself, all that blessed while!"

"Explain, Bartrand!" said the spirit.

"Just give me that jolly wand of yours while the sun goes round from the fishes to the old man with his water pot; small thanks that he does not shake it over us while the scorpion is biting with his fiery tongue! Just give us the wand, and ye may sleep till ye quite get back your senses; for I will keep the thunder safe from waking ye close in its dark closet."

"Well, Bartrand, you shall have it; and with it I resign all command over sun and cloud, drought and flood. Only keep strict the account in book and leger."

Again the spirit vanished, and as Bartrand glanced around to see whether truly he were in the body or out of it, he saw a writhing light upon his staff, like the twisted wand of the vision. He flourished it like a shillalah over his head; "And now," said he, "for a harrycane that shall just sweep through the whole street, barring this place of my own, and the path above where I must go to dinner."

The poor fellow was stunned himself at the din and uproar he created. The thunder roared, and the lightning flashed! fire, dust, wind, and water seemed a combination of the four elements to obey his mandate. Trees were uptwisted by the roots, and laid like a French barricade across the pavements. Awnings flapped in the gale like troubled wings, while smoke and dirt went eddying every where but up into the sky. Shops were in ruins and goods in fragments, chimneys prostrate and windows smashed.

All but Bartrand's shop, which stood bolt upright, like "a pillar of salt," amid the desolation; or rather like a pillar without the salt.

"Whisth! shooh! Behave now!" roared Bartrand, waving his staff. "Have done, and let the harrycane begone with him!" The storm sank like a cowering cur, and the sunlight smiled on the havoc there was made.

Bartrand was now satisfied with the weather, and he laid aside his stick, with its serpentine light, and swept his shop and dusted his shelves, glad to see that all who came to look at the wonderful storm track stepped into his door to remark its capricious leaps and overshots, and usually ended by some purchase of necessaries unattainable elsewhere. He could now set his own prices and defy all competition; but his

downcast neighbors were immediately looking about them to repair the breaches. So, when Bartrand heard a farmer crying his lands for sale in the market because the late storm had ruined his crops, he took his receipts, or rather his spoils, and bought the finely-situated homestead.

Bartrand calculated little enough for others, but he wanted long bright days to set the land in order; and there was sunshine until the vermin had strengthened so that they might almost eat him up, and the locusts and grasshoppers were snapping in the fields like a pattering hail storm. The harvest and hunter's moons passed by in brightness, and then Bartrand bethought him of soaking the stubble and rubbish in the ground, and filling up the springs for winter. So he called for the rains, and the floods descended, sometimes in transient torrents, and again in gentle, unceasing drippings, day after day, and with short intervals, week after week.

"This is all very nice!" said Bartrand, "but now we will have a strong, fresh wind, that shall blow the vapors out of our brains, and give vigor to our unstrung nerves. The west wind! Yes, that's a man's best friend; and can he have too much of his company? I will have it here for a week;" and so he waved his staff, and the west wind raised its clear whistle.

"It is good for us, blood and bone," said

Bartrand, after a few days, "but the roots in the ground would be better preserved from it. We will have a snow that shall lie like a warm counterpane over them." And he waved his wand for the snow wraith, that came trailing down from the mountains with her white blankets on her arm.

Then, for days and days, was she busy sowing her tiny feathers over hill, vale, and ice-bound river. Again Bartrand waved his staff, and the snow wraith sailed away from the horizon, the glad sunlight threw a dazzling radiance over the earth, and the little roots nestled quietly in their brown hiding-places.

The merry sleighs flew round, and the ice was heaped up in huge blocks for summer use; there where it had laid its crystal piers for a free bridge over the streamlet.

Bartrand went into the ice business, and prophesied a good season. And so it was, right long and cold, and when his great ship was full of blocks, as firm as metal and clear as diamond, he sent her away to the ports of India.

"Ugh!" said the little children, who shivered in the streets; and "Ugh!" said Bartrand, as the beggars stopped him in the eye of the wind to plead for charity.

"It would take a thousand fortunes to maintain all these beggars, and make them comfortable

with light and fuel. Better give them sunshine at once. Besides, my own nerves and muscles have been tight strung too long."

Then he demanded sunshine; and as the days grew long and the sun rode high the snows melted, and there were freshets on the streams and lakes in the pastures. Bartrand did not like the great upswelling of the waters, but he could not help them, and now saw the mischief of the long cold and heavy snows. He cared little for the muddy streets, while the sun and waters were soaking rich juices from the muck and rubbish over his fields and gardens.

But in good time the wet was over, and the drought came. Then the leaves sprang forth, and the green verdure on the hills; the forests murmured lullabies to their soft, young offspring, and the orchards smiled in their roseate beauty. The beautiful Spring, with its birds, buds, and blossoms, was on the earth.

"This is very fine; but now that the seed time is over I must give them all a soaking, and fill up the pools and cisterns for summer." So he waved his staff for the early rains, and they came, drizzle, drizzle, half mist, half shower, but with the gentle touch young Nature asked. It needed patience to wait till the work was thoroughly done; and then the staff was waved for bright sunshine, and clear, unclouded

skies. How beautiful the earth looked, and how vigorously she wrought, in her giant strength, for the future!

But Bartrand wanted his foreign ships; and, at the risk of blight, he waved his staff for the east winds, that should fill their sails and waft them to the harbor. His lambkins shivered, and his chickens died; but the vessels came, and the blight was not fatal.

Then he called for sunny days to dry the meadow patch, and after that for rains to quench the thirst of highland pastures. It seemed a heterogeneous medley of rain and shine; for much of the time Bartrand knew not what weather would really suit him best. The corn wanted wet when potatoes wanted drought; and the hay would suffer if the grain must thrive. Then came the ripening time for fruits and plants, and the hot sweltering mists came smoking over the earth, veiling the fierce sunbeams, and moistening the ground; though Bartrand himself, and his family, were all a-weary of the clammy noisome air. But then he bethought him of a grand thunder shock, with a "hail-stone chorus," that should invigorate their frames and purify the earth. And thus on, until the time came round when the vision should return and reclaim his wand. His fields were white to the harvest, and his orchards bur-

dened with fruit. "I have done it well," thought he; "that other one may now see that a lesson or two for him would little be amiss."

Suddenly the same grave, radiant, statue-like being, with the transparent wings and golden locks, was in the air before him.

"But have not I done well, Mr. Weather-Clerk, All-Ometer, or however I should call you?" demanded Bartrand, impatiently.

"Bring me your books," replied the vision.

Bartrand opened them before him, the last year's record and the present, which was all but gone. Together they bent over the leaves, and compared them, page for page, week for week, month for month; and Bartrand saw that just such weather as he had complained of, when another had disposed it, he had ordered himself when the seasons were in his power.

The vision resumed the sunny wand, and with it sun, shower, shade, and shadow. He left Bartrand a better man, too wise now to complain when strong winds from the west bore back his ships and rent their sails, too understanding to open his lips when the hurricane beat down his grain stalks to the earth. When the east wind came, he said, "It is well;" and to the western breeze, "Thou art, indeed, a friend;" to the north wind, "Thou art powerful in thy services;" and to the south, "Thou art a sweetly perfumed

nurse." The sun, to him, was now as a king in his chariot, scattering golden largesse; and the clouds were as gentle angels and ministers of mercy.

It was "Very well;" "Yes, a very good story, *for Ben.*" So said they all. Even Phil and Fred were loud in their verdict that it was "*a very good story for Ben to write!*"

Ben really did not know whether to feel complimented or not. He thought it best, though, to take it all in good part; so he got up and scraped and bowed, and said he was "infinitely obliged," — "not at all prepared for so gracious a reception," — "really quite overwhelmed," — "in his sky there was now no cloud," — "and, however storms might rage around, within was brightest sunshine."

Then he drew his white cambric over his eyes, and pressed his hand upon his heart, and seated himself again, amid the renewed plaudits of the company.

Aunt Mary told him she intended to draw a sketch of his Weather Clerk, though she would have to lose the beauty of his wings, which after all were the prettiest things about him; and Ben was quite consoled.

The project was mooted of getting up a drawing for every story. Aunt Mary and Lottie, even Evaleen and Sophy, could assist in this plan; and thus there would be "a plurality of pleasures for them," said Eva. Ben thought there would be a quadrupality, if they got up an illustration of Phil's horse, also; and this was promised: Lottie undertaking the "Fairies," Aunt Mary daguerreotyping "Old Bartrand," and Sophy promising to take good care of the charger, which Phil said he must "charge her" to array in most unseemly guise; his only fear being that the poor brute would, in such lovely hands, grow too beautiful and shapely. Sophy promised that "it should be horrible;" and with this assurance the party separated for the night.

Evening Fourth.

It was Sophy's turn to entertain the company At least, it turned out she was the only one ready to do so.

Sophy was the youngest of the writing club, and had felt highly honored by being invited to join it. She had taken extra pains to acquit herself with honor, and for the last three days had been secluded in her room, while others were enjoying themselves in games and plays. She had also been frequently observed to steal into the cold library, with her shawl on her shoulders, and pull over histories, geographies, travels, maps, &c.; and Ben, who had observed these manœuvres, conjectured there would be something coming of a more recent date than Alexandrian lore. He could not guess what; perhaps a fable of the Cid, or of Christopher Columbus, or of some Saracen, for all the girl's researches were of "the noble land of Spain." She could not meet him at the table, or pass him in the hall, or shrink from him in the parlor, without hearing some welcoming quotation. "Seek by the silvery Darro!" "Flow, Rio Verde!" "Thus sang

a Zegri maid!" "Bird that art singing on Ebro's side!"

> "There are sounds in the dark Roncesvalles;
> There are echoes on Biscay's wild shore."

Sophy was seriously annoyed; and her mother congratulated her for firmness when she found she had not been turned from her purpose by this nonsense.

She brought her manuscript to the table, with the first lighter to the tall lamp; and it was a goodly mass of scribbling, though in a very fine hand, "to make it seem shorter," as Ben suggested.

Sophy laughed, and told them that as Phil, and Ben, and Fred (for she had peeped at the beginning of his story) had all written about old men, she had taken the liberty to choose *a young man* for her hero.

"Thus sang a Zegri maid!" whispered Ben, in one of those undertones that reach every where; and Sophy, to get rid of him, commenced her story of SWANS AND LILIES, or

THE MYSTIC LAKE.

LOPEZ began to think he did not like Juana, because she was not beautiful like the *donnas* at the opera, or the sweet singers at the vintage feasts. But Lopez did love the beakers of warm milk Juana brought him from her goats, and he loved the fresh olives and new cakes, the large grape clusters and the sweet oranges, she still shared with him from the astrologer's garden And he did love when he was away at the hostel, or the dance, or the opera, gazing upon the tinselled beauties, whose smiles were broad, open, and impartial as the lights on the Guadalquiver; he did love then to remember that Juana was at her home; that only the old garden wall separated that home from his own; that she peeped in on the old miser as he locked his cabinet and sat by the doorway to munch a crust; and he loved to feel assured that another watchful glance told her when he was quietly asleep, and the old house safe from fire or the robbers. It was good of Juana to think so of his father and of him.

But when he was in the midst of those festive scenes, when the loud orchestral music wavered

through the theatrum; when the dancers floated before his eyes in spangled robes of many-colored beauty; when the rose, and purple, and soft blue mingled wantonly in the maze of brilliance; then he thought little of Juana. Then he would have given all the pleasant recollections of their childhood; of her tender, thoughtful regard from her infancy; of the solitude that had so darkened his youngest days, save when she had reflected light upon them; he would have given all these for one smile, such as the prima donna gave to the cavalier who threw her the brightest garland or rarest jewel. He dreamed of a future in which Juana had but little part, but in which song, and dance, and festive angels were supreme; and he sighed to think that future was not more wholly at his command; that the foretaste of pleasures, which were to be his aim or his inheritance, that this foretaste was his by sufferance only; and the sighs deepened as the fear came to him that youth, with its rich pleasure zest, might all be passed ere the means of life were his. But Lopez never allowed himself to doubt Juana's goodness as he had done her beauty. Indeed, the subject admitted no doubt; so he was still kind to her, and told her stories gathered from the goatherds and muleteers, and sang the airs that floated through the villages from the [illegible]d serranos, and talked of guerilla fights, and strange

adventures in the sierras, at least strange to her, who staid so quietly at home, and never heard aught but the bird songs in the chestnut trees, the bee hum in the vineyard, or the olive dell; or the buzzing of flies in the orange grove, or about the flowers of the old man's garden. Juana's mother had been housekeeper to Gonzalez, the astrologer; and during her life, the little girl had never spoken to her master. She only saw him when he wandered through the garden to take the air, or sat by the ruined fountain at the tiny lake within its bounds, or when the tinkling of a little bell in the high turret announced his wish for some service or refreshment. But when old Katherine was sick, and died, the young daughter displayed so much of good sense, industry, and quick capacity, that the astrologer resolved to transfer the house duties to her, rather than to admit a stranger to their rude habitation.

There had been strange reports in old Katherine's time that Juana was more nearly related to Gonzalez than to her; but judging from his cold, distant deportment towards her, it was as probable that the child had no claim of blood upon either.

But she had now a claim upon the care and consideration of the only one of her surviving guardians that was not met, for Gonzalez in his turret and his studies thought little of the dangers

of the lone girl growing up in the shadow of his roof tree, yet exposed to the designs of the lazy Lopez. Exposed, at least, to heart trials — for such Juana now endured, as the times began to change; and Lopez, so kind to her as a servitor, forgot the equal fortunes and misfortunes of their mutual childhood.

Now Juana's life had changed, from one of play with Lopez, alternated by menial duties for her mother, to one of some responsibility and care, though the astrologer's housekeeping was but a simple affair. To carry him sparkling water from the fountain, with cakes and oil, was the most frequent duty; but there was labor over many little things. Lopez was at first as helpful as when they had only played at life's duties. He brought back the goats when they wandered far into the rocky sierras; he planted pulse, and mended up the rents in the low wall, all but the gap that had so long been the gateway for themselves. He bundled fagots for her from the decaying trees in the grove and orchard; he looped back or trimmed up the vines that were darkening too much the low gable where Juana toiled, though they did not meddle with the creepers that went scrambling all over the old turret, and must have screened too wholly the sunshine from the slit windows of Gonzalez.

For all this Juana was so grateful that she

could not do too much, in her own small way, of mending, and waiting, and watching for him, or of sharing all her little luxuries and comforts, as when they had played within the call of mother Katherine.

But these helps and gifts were now so common to Lopez, that he did not value them to their worth; and the every-day face of Juana, so kind and expressive, had for him no beauty like that which attracted him to the dancers or the singers.

But how did Lopez, the miser's boy, get money for the dance, the drama, or the song? Lopez could get money for nothing else; none for a trade, or any other business; only his share of the meagre household rations, a few pence for the daily marketing, and a round of duties more simple and unvaried than Juana's, inasmuch as the miser lived more scantily than the astrologer; but he had the assurance that one day he was to be the owner of a great fortune.

"Then," said he to himself, "then I will do well for Juana. She shall not pick fruit, and gather pulse, and dip water for old Gonzalez. I will give her a marriage portion, or a dowry for a convent, if she likes;" and he thought this a magnanimous intention.

But now he got the means for frolics and shows in anticipation. Any day the old miser

might go where he could not take his money; and it was worth while for all the managers and showmen to be on good terms with Lopez, to stimulate his love of the pleasures that they offered, and then, in good time, would come their pickings from the miser's hoard.

So Lopez was one of the loudest to shout applause at the beautiful sopranos who came to the opera, or the light-footed artistes who enchanted at the vaudeville. The seraphic Elmina, and the celestial Theresa, were now the divinities of his worship; and only, as she was so serviceable, was his faithful Juana at all remembered. She alone mourned over his dissipations and defections; she alone still cherished faith in his heart-goodness, and prophesied his return to duty and to usefulness.

Now her days were very lonely. There were no more for her the snatches of the guerilla march, or catches of serrano music; only in Lopez's own doorway the faint humming of soprano novelties, and the last creations of the orchestra.

"Do not go away to-night," said Juana to him, one eve at sunset time. "The old man has twice fallen to-day, and it was me who helped him to his feet. There may be but a poor sleep for him upon his pallet in that old room."

"Juana," replied Lopez, "you know that all Valencia says old Gonzalez is an astrologer."

"He is a constant student," replied Juana, evasively, "and he knows the stars."

"I wish," he answered, "that he would read my horoscope, and tell if I am to be rich and prosperous, and how long I must wait for this fortune, or any other fate."

"Would it do you any good to know?"

"I do believe it would help to make me grow a better man. Only think, what a shambling, uncertain life I live, not knowing how long it will last, nor which way I had better turn."

Juana looked as though the shadow of some old heroine had fallen upon her. Her form straightened, and there was light, like that of a far-fallen starbeam, in her eyes.

"Lopez," she said, "I will do for you to-night what I have never done for myself. I will ask old Gonzalez for your fortune, for your fate. He may be angry, but I will risk it for your sake. Only promise me this, that you will not go to the song or dance; that you will remain here, near your old father."

"Ay, I will readily promise this much," gayly answered Lopez.

"It is now his musing time," rejoined Juana. "Now, and until the twilight is all over, and then he will light his taper, which we can see through the loopholes of the turret. Then I will go to him, and you can watch, if you please, the flick-

ering of my lamp through the windows as I climb the turret."

Lopez was too much excited to notice the sadness in her voice, nor did it occur to him that it was sorrow, or the pain of great doubt and suspense, that had instigated her to this unwonted invasion. He did not think how the passing away of his friendship for her, at least of the supreme regard and confidence of their childhood, had overshadowed her heart, and that there were womanly anticipations of an utter forgetfulness.

So she said but little to Lopez, as they waited for the shadows to overclimb the sierras, and the sunset to die away in purple glories from the distant mountain, but she did not forget him, there by her side; she brought him new milk and soft cakes, a cluster of grapes and a ripe orange, and she presented her little feast with her old girlish smile.

At length the student lamp, like a faint star, was gleaming from the turret top, and Juana said "good by" to Lopez.

The boy drew her to his arms a moment, as if to hold her back from danger, and would have given her again an old child kiss, as once had been his wont; but Juana slipped from his grasp and was gone.

He watched the light as it fired up in the

gable end, then its reappearance by the ivied entrance arch, its darkening at the turret's foot, and then its gleaming through the loophole slits, one over another, growing longer in its darkenings, as if a wearied step was bearing it aloft; and then his heart beat hard as if in sympathy, when it arrived at the upper floor, there, on the forbidden platform, which the desperate girl was so boldly invading. He saw her shadow, and that of the opening door, as she entered, and then all was lost in the room's redoubled brightness. There was a waiting that seemed long to him; but still the lights burned on, and there was no returning of Juana. He could not go in and lie down upon his bed to sleep; so there, as the bell struck the midnight hours, he leaned listlessly against the broken wall, and thought of his fate and of Juana.

By and by, through the drowsy stillness, he heard a fluttering in the astrologer's garden, and looking through the starlight to see if Juana were coming on wings to him, he saw that the lakelet was covered with white swans, swimming to and fro in the clear sky sheen. As he gazed longer they stopped still among the snowy lilies, and to his confused imaginings the white wings lifted up, the swan's form disappeared therein, and only lilies lifted their bright bells from the leaf-covered waters. Again the broad petals

curved over, the swan's crest reappeared, and arched necks bent where stiff stamens had centred in their gold-tipped lily beauty.

Lopez thought each swan's eye turned to him, and when the lilies swayed over on their sides, their floating tops seemed opening towards his gaze. He slipped from his rest upon the mossy stones, and soon was at the lake and close to the trickling fountain. As he did this, a lily arose from her watery bed, and reaching her lithe stem to him, the open bell glowed larger and larger, until he stood at the opal entrance of some unknown descent. He gave himself up to the enchantment, and stood within the lily's bloom, the soft brilliance and sweet perfume of its arched dome. Down, down the spiral way, where streaks of green and crimson light were wound in the transparence, his fevered foot descended; and then, far, deep below the lakelet's bed, and every sound above, but the faint echoes of the fluttering swans, he stood in the still darkness. He pressed forward where there was open space; and like the closing of a flower was the rolling up of a screen, when he stood within a vast hall, of shape like an inverted bell, and soft traced flutings, like the blending petals of that flower from which the whole was modelled. Like a lily on a porcelain salver was this high dome on its opal pavement; and its own rich

bloom was better than another light could be. Soft odors, like those that float from over a blossoming lake, were in the hall; and at the apex of the dome, like the convergence of a calyx, were the brilliant-colored lights — the petal streamings of purest red and green. There was a golden ball depending from the centre, with a soft, chased surface, that might have won gigantic bees for clustering pollen. Lopez had only half enough admired the hall, when an old spider-legged domino appeared and motioned him to pass to another hall of the lilies. He entered as a petal fold closed over him, and saw seated there a lady of surpassing beauty, with an arched neck, proudly curving, like an enamoured swan; and the floating of her spread drapery was like that of downy wings on the lake's still surface.

Lopez devoured this swan's queen with his eyes, for she was far more beautiful than any dancer he had ever seen; and when she spoke, her voice was sweet and full, like that of the richest-toned soprano.

She called Lopez to her side, and bade him stand and tell all his adventures; of his home, of the astrologer's lake, turret, and garden; of the miser and his hoard; only she bade him be still, with a voice more like a peacock than a swan, when he told her of Juana.

"But she is not beautiful, like you," said

Lopez, "nor can she dance or sing, or even array herself to be comely. Yet she has been good to the old astrologer, to my father, and to me."

"Hush!" screeched the swan queen, with her neck drawn back in fury; then she smiled and said, "Tell me of the dancers and the songs!"

Lopez was willing to talk of these until he was very tired; and then the lady begged him to bring her sweet drops from a crystal bush in the garden, which he did, and was astonished at the glittering beauty of the flowers, trees, and temples there.

There were arabesque lattices around the light parterres, and such a mingling of light sculpture, with fretted buds and garlands, and the lily breath of cut and real blossoms, that what was growth, and what was chiselled plant or tree, poor Lopez could not tell. But he found the white drops, like snow berries by a crystal fountain, and took them to the wondrous lady. She gave him some sweet clusters; and there was in them flavor like a lily's scent. After this he plucked the many frosted fruits, and quenched his thirst with the melting crystals of the garden.

He was so well pleased with this life that the lady said to him one day, —

"Lopez, I am weary of the spider-legged domino, and wish you to stay here and be my constant attendant."

Lopez was so ravished with her beauty and her riches, that he forgot his father and Juana, even the dancers and the singers; and he said, "I will stay!"

But though it was better than blending applause with other admirers at a grand spectacle to worship the graceful swan queen, yet after a while it grew quite tedious. Every day the spider-legged domino carried him away to a crystal cell in the dim twilight; and every day he brought him back again, to find his adored one renewed in beauty, refreshed with rest, and transported with joy at his presence after this transient absence. But there she ever was — so exacting in her demands upon his service and attention. He must tell over the same stories and sing the same songs the thousandth time, if she wished it. He must roam abroad in the garden to find the frosted fruits; and she was querulous in her complaints that the finest were not found.

When satiety had somewhat abated his admiration of her charms, she blamed him that the ardor of his ecstasy was over; she had nothing to relate that might relieve his tedium; to admire her charms must be his lifelong service; to talk of home and of Juana was especially forbidden; and in his heart he began to fear that, to revel in the smiles of unchanging beauty, might prove rather a monotonous life business.

A sort of despair had made him bold at last; for one day he ventured to incur her displeasure, he requesting her to walk with him; indeed, he had never seen her rise from the low throne, or dais, where in state she always received him. He thought he saw an angry flush pass over the snowy bust, the long-arched, stainless throat, the rounded cheeks, and polished brow; and then she said, "You do not love me, Lopez!"

"I would see you in more than one phase of beauty," he replied. "Who could sit more beautifully than you to be admired? What monarch, in all creation, can bend the head more gracefully under its sovereign weight of power? Where is there a prouder turn of the neck, or a more graceful curve to the snowy throat? The bust and arms, with their faint tinge of coralline, so outlined in their drapery, like cygnets' wings, — what could ravish more the sight? But then the other beauteous limbs lie coiled beneath that envious robe like swans' feet in a stream; and the step, so like a dance as it must be, — why should it never be displayed? The movement of the foot, — why hidden, when that of the arm is so entrancing?"

At that moment old Spider Legs came in; but when he was next admitted to his adored one, she was standing. The long robes were fallen to her full stature; the balloon-like drapery

of the arm had all collapsed, and shrunken to her side; the neck, no longer arched, was frightfully straightened up; and there, in glistening white, she stood, within the lily hall, a tall, live, radiant lily. Her crown of gold was clasped by glittering amber bees, and, with the lifted sceptre, answered well to the odorous pollen stalks of a full-blossomed flower. But the curved, brooding swan rest, all was gone.

"Lopez," she said, "come with me."

She floated like a lily in the breeze before him, to a temple of ivory, carved with the minutest open work of arabesque design, and, through the fairy lattices, was the perfume of sweetest water flowers. A wreath of inlaid scarlet coral was all around the dome, and ivory, mingled with coral mosaic, formed the pave on which they trod. At a motion of her sceptre, the inlaid wainscoting flew back, and there exposed her crystal cabinets, where insects of every kind lay petrified in amber. Golden green and ruby purple, with silver spots and shining eyes, were some of the most prominent among these; but in all there was a strain as of an embalmed agony, and Lopez asked her why these beautiful insects had been thus sepulchred.

"These," said she, "were once my admirers; but one after another they passed from me, as a bee passes from a lily to a rose or violet, or even

to a clover blossom or daisy, and I was forgotten. I did not forget them, and they are here."

"And the old spider-legged domino, — was he also one of those treacherous ones?"

"He did not desert me for another; but he grew weary of admiring, and offered at last to serve me."

"How can they cease to admire?" asked Lopez, in a tone of agonized rapture.

The lily queen sighed — "Alas! I do not know."

Lopez was profuse in his protestations; and, when they had passed back through the gardens to the lily hall, he threw himself at her feet in passionate devotion, as she settled back with the old swan-like air and grace; and again from the back falling tissues appeared the lovely arm, with its finger tips of coralline, and the sweet throat, arching softly over, as if satisfied thus to rest after the exhibition of all that graceful movement and despotic coquetry.

Then she motioned Spider Legs, and Lopez was taken again away.

In his solitude he could not refrain from thoughts of Juana; of her unfailing sweetness and gentleness; how patient she had been during all his wanderings to the singers and the dancers; how she still watched over his interests, and advised him for his good; and how he had aban-

domed her, contrary to his promise, on the very night she had risked, perhaps, her life to gratify his selfish curiosity; how, forgetful of her, he had promised allegiance to one so dazzling to his eye, but now abhorrent to his heart.

While thus musing, time insensibly slipped by, and then old Spider Legs came back to bring him to his devotions.

Again the swan queen smiled her blandishments; but Lopez, after kneeling a while, murmuring of his love, begged her to join him in a blithesome dance.

"Alas!" said she, angrily, "why ask me this?"

"To see your grace and floating movement in its utmost splendor," he replied.

Again the arms fell hidden in the elongated drapery; the queen arose in all her stately lily pride, and floated round the bell-domed hall, then sank like a swan upon the the waters, down to her dais, when the fair arms reappeared amid her sleeves like rosy muscles in a downy wing.

Lopez wondered, and ventured to speak.

"Will you not," said he, "when you may delight me with a dance again, extend your arms to mine, and, by the slightest touch of your finger tips, inspire me with the melody of your motion?"

"Lopez," said she, "you would love to possess a monopoly of graces and delights. When

I have limbs for dancing, I have no arms to extend to any one. When I sit, and alone need them, these useful members are mine in their perfection."

Lopez did not dare to express his horror and surprise. The mystic being had well explained herself. She was not perfect in all the limbs, but could transfer at will the perfection of her grace and beauty to either the one or the other of them. She was either the graceful, stately lily, in her floating step, or the lovely brooding swan, with such perfection of head, and neck, and wing, in her throned sittings. Yes, she was beautiful, either as swan or lily; but there was now such an overpowering sense of awful deficiency, if not mutilation, that he could no more love her. Through several interviews he tried to play well his part of ravished adorer, for the remembrance of the sepulchred flies, who might once have been so like himself, was ever haunting him. But he could not quite conceal his fear, pain, disquiet, and disgust; and fearing it might some time break from him, he sought old Spider Legs, and begged of him the secret to the lily's egress.

"Do you renounce the worship of all mere beauty, if I will let you go?" said the servitor; and when Lopez looked up into his face to promise, he thought he saw, as through a mask, the features of old Gonzalez, the astrologer.

"If I can only return to my home from here," he answered, "I will henceforth love only the simple, and worship only the good."

Spider Legs smiled grimly, and led him back to the old ruined fountain, through some subterranean way, and then he rubbed his eyes to see if he were really on the earth again. The morning star was shining dimly, and he hastened to his own door, for he thought he heard a moaning. It was so. The old miser lay there in a sleep, but the last change had come to him in his slumber. He did not know Lopez was at his side; but he fumbled about for the keys of his cabinet, and held them firmly in his death grasp, till the hand stiffened over them. Then Lopez threw back the sheet upon his face, and went out, moaning in his loneliness for Juana. She came instantly, but the neat black walking dress had been laid aside this morn, and she was clad in simple white, as for a vintage dance or bridal. A lily, wet with lake water or the morning dew, was in her hair; and a silver arrow bound back the black tresses, like a feather from a glistening wing.

Lopez started to see her thus arrayed, and a painful memory came to him. But there was pleasure too, with all this pain and confused remembrance, to see her active step, the neat, light foot, and the ever helpful hand; and when

she raised her head to gaze into his eyes, he thought he saw in her a new beauty, like the first smile of the swan queen on him.

She spoke tenderly to him of his loss, and then busied herself about the dead. When she brought him the keys, taken out from the dead hand's grasp, she said, "Lopez, these will open to you the sources of long-coveted pleasures!"

"I wish for nothing now but you," he replied, with a burst of sorrow. "I am alone: will you not come to me? for I will forget all others in a never-ceasing love for my childhood's friend."

"We will ask the astrologer," she replied, "and he can tell if the stars be propitious to our union."

They went up together into the old turret, but the astrologer was not there.

His books, and charts, and instruments were strewed around as when Juana had seen him the night before; nor was he in the large chair of the dark recess, where all night long he had bound her in a dreamless sleep.

They went back through the garden. There they found him by the lake side, stiff with the cold tricklings of the fountain, motionless, and still.

He never looked upon the stars again: but Lopez and Juana took possession of the old garden, gable, and turret; and this, with the miser's hoard, was to them a great possession.

Lopez wandered no more abroad for beauty; for Juana, whose hands and feet he thought so perfect, was henceforth his model of feminine loveliness.

Ben said that Sophy had displayed good judgment, or a true woman's tact, in one thing: she had made her story take up so much of the evening, there was but little time left to criticize it. He thought he had discovered an anachronism or two in it, but it was too late to see about it.

Sophy said *she* was in no haste to retire, and would be glad to listen to any criticism.

Katie asked what an anachronism was; and Ben replied that it was "a violent yoking together of two dates, eras, places, or things, which had no natural affinity for each other, and could only be kept in wedded thraldom by the most arbitrary force."

Katie looked particularly enlightened. Phil said it was "bringing the Guadalquiver into a channel which that romantic stream never thought of forcing its way into, though it had performed many *out-of-the-way* feats."

Sophy looked troubled.

Her father reassured her, by telling her she had done very well; though, he added, "that he might not lose his reputation as a judge;"

so Ben insinuated that it had the usual faults of a fanciful young writer; it was a little extravagant — not classically simple and clear.

He instanced the mysterious connection between the astrologer and fountain, with some other minutiæ of the story, and the too sudden conversion of Lopez into a sensible fellow, with the too trite ending by killing off so many at a time.

But her mother thought they should not overlook the good idea in it, of the beautiful arms at the expense of feet, and the *vice versa* — the display of one perfection, which has been often thus obtained through the loss of others quite as essential to a harmoniously developed person or mind.

Sophy was comforted, and bade good night to the little girls with a tap of her roll; and then the children left the room.

Evening Fifth.

It was Fred's appointment, and he was prepared to meet it: like Sophy, he had taken unusual pains to prove himself worthy of the post assigned him, and had bestowed more thought on his story than both the other boys together.

He had finished his work very much to his own satisfaction, and when joked once or twice about his visits to the library, he disclaimed, he said, "any references, except to the original Alexandrian library." To be sure, he wanted to know that he spelled words correctly, especially when they were neither English nor even European.

Katie and Ellen yawned at the very thought of foreign words, which Fred, with his Latin, did not know how to spell without going into the library; and Ben asked what sort of a lexicon "Lalla Rookh" was. Fred was too proud of his achievement to be at all scared.

He said he had sought but two words in "Lalla Rookh." He knew them to be there, and did not know at the moment where else to find them, though he could have read them without their

being spelled at all; yet he wished them to be right in his manuscript.

"And that was right!" said his father.

"Yes, right to have it all in apple *pie* order *for the printer*," said Ben, with a droll expression.

"And who knows but that *our* stories may be printed some time?" said Sophy, who looked very willing to martyrize herself for the benefit of more children like Katie and Ellen.

Fred began his story of ABDALLAH, OR

THE GOLDEN DEMON.

As Abdallah, merchant of Bagdad, was counting up his gains, he saw arise from the casket a demon of most unearthly visage, but a most earthly vesture. But, through the scabs and scales of clotted dirt that seemed his outer garment, there gleamed, like fire through lava crust, or sun through cloud, the brightness of a living gold. A golden demon to the very core was the being, grinning his sardonic, questionable smile, and saying, with a laugh that was fearful to hear, —

"Now, old boy, I am come at last to give you my services!"

"Very familiar," quoth Abdallah in his heart; "old boy, yourself, and begone to you!" But aloud he spoke softly, as he stroked his beard, "But when, where, and how long am I to have the talisman of gold?"

"Here! now! and, if at all, for a whole year! But, Abdallah, you are not to be so much more favored than myself. You too must be *a golden demon!*" Abdallah winced.

"Allah Acbah!" said he slowly.

"None of your Allahs!" shouted the demon

angrily. "You should be the contented Moslem; or, if not so, you may be a golden demon.'

"Great is gold!" said Abdallah, "and the sovereign of all gold is good! I am his slave!" and he bowed to the ground. The demon laughed until the echoes came rumbling back from the very depths of the earth. "Now, Abdallah," said he, as he laid on him a claw, whose touch was like consuming fire, "you have the gift of THE GOLDEN TOUCH, and all riches are at your command. It is yours for a year and a day; and then I will return to remand or renew it;" and there was a horrid sarcasm in the word *renew*. Abdallah bowed again, until his beard swept the floor; and when he arose, the demon had vanished. So he locked his casket, and left the bazaar. When he came to his house, he met his faithful slave in silence, and retired to his inner chamber. He threw himself upon his couch and slept; and when the morning came, he awoke to the muezzin's call, and to the fresh sunlight glowing on the high minarets. There was great joy awakened by the sight of those golden pinnacles, and he sprang from the cushions in the strength of his rare power. But he looked back upon the print of his own figure, like the swathings of a golden mummy, where he had slept. His feet and hands left golden tracks wherever they touched, and Abdallah groaned in

spirit as he saw the thick golden stains around him. He pondered long in silence, and then called his faithful slave. Selim was an Arab who had been conquered in his first battle with his enemies, and because of his youth, strength, and beauty, they gave him the choice of death, or life with servitude. So he chose slavery, for he was very young, and there is always hope with life. He was sold in the market to Abdallah, and in the greatness of his fidelity he proved his princely birth.

Abdallah told him of the strange blessing he now possessed, and proved it by the traces all around, and by laying his hand on Selim's turban, which was changed to gold. Then he took a shekel, and made its likeness in wax, which a touch transmuted to gold, and thus he multiplied riches until the morning was passed. Selim brought him bread, fruit, and wine; but as his hand grasped the viands, they became golden mockeries of the refreshment he sought. He spurned the golden dates and glittering goblet; and when he saw the bread even as a stone to him, he sighed heavily. Selim took them away, and all day long Abdallah paced, with a heart heavy as gold, the *fretted* path between his bed and casement. His steps became more weary as each new fallen fold of his mantle became a solid brocade, and every tassel a golden bell

Hunger too was gnawing at his vitals; and for a year more was all this to be endured! Again, at nightfall, Selim brought cakes and wine, and Abdallah lay far back among the golden cushions, while the slave passed the meat and drink beyond the organs of touch to those of taste. It was a hazardous task; for a slip of the arm or fall of the head might have aurified him forever. But the calm strength of his devotedness saved him; and Abdallah was strengthened and rejoiced. Then he tried to sleep; but his mattress was like the hollow of a golden coffin, where his form once sunk into an elastic couch. His back became a galling sore, and his sides were chafed or numbed. But the merchant had a stout frame, and his heart could at first rejoice in his great possession. He hoped to survive his power and retain its benefits, and set himself to multiply his substance. He could buy many slaves, and give Selim freedom and riches; but his very life and secret were now dependent upon the Bedouin. So he gave him a princely palace, with attendants who might minister to his wants; but the Arab himself was almost ever in painful, anxious duty around his master.

Selim had purchased for his master a palace exceeding the caliph's in richness and splendor. It was paved, and ceiled, and curtained with gold, that his steps might be most free; and there,

with restless feet, he dragged his heavy mantle, as a prisoner might drag his weary chain. There was for him no medicine in the bath, no rest on the divan. He could not lave his hand or head in the cool fountain, nor press the fragrant rose or lily to his lips.

With muffled steps he hardly ventured into the palace of his slave, whence the loathed metal was carefully banished. There soft, silken cushions and light muslin draperies met his sight and mocked his heart. He would return to his golden prison, and lie prone in wretched weariness for hours and hours, and then rise to take a weird pleasure in changing the soft roses. that Selim had brought for his vases, into hard, burnished garlands, when his touch passed over them, as a pianist now might touch the keys of the gamut. Only the one hand gives life to the inanimate, and the other brought death to the fresh and beautiful. Sometimes, in his golden chariot, he coursed through the great city; but he knew that all who saw him marked the hard, sallow, sunken, look, visible beneath the golden turban.

His visits to the bazaar were, of course, abandoned; yet ere his health and spirits quite failed, there was much joy in the accumulation of such great possessions. But it was Selim's eye that selected radiant gems, and gave the preference

to regal damasks. Selim's hand secured the beauties of the gardens, the rarities of the market. It was Selim's touch that revelled in soft satins; it was Selim alone who found it a privilege to handle the gold.

The little antelope and sportive ichneumon, whose gambols had served to amuse the slave and his master, were now forbidden to sport near Abdallah; and he took no pleasure in the presence of any living thing.

There was no need to brush away a fly, or shrink from the sting of a bee, for every insect fell from his skin a golden model. The flowers sometimes amused him, but to feel their soft petals was to destroy them and lose their fragrance.

But most he sorrowed at the loss of old friendships; for the merchants of Bagdad courted his presence no more than he obtruded upon them. There seemed a misgiving throughout the city that shamed and grieved him. The good Moslems said, "Abdallah has become a great magician, but the blessing of Allah is denied to all his glory."

There was one treasure debarred him, which he longed for all the more because beyond his power. So it was with a heart as heavy as his robe that he listened to Selim's words one day—"There is a slave merchant, from the mountains of Circassia, who is possessor of a girl, beautiful

as the queen of the houris: would my master look upon her marvellous beauty?" "Nay, send him hence," was the stern reply. But the merchant would not depart, and insisted that Abdallah should look upon the maid. She was brought into his presence, and her veil lifted before his eyes. O, how his heart ached as he saw the fair hand he might never touch, the light form he might never clasp! Then came the thought of a succeeding year, could he but live through this; and at all events he would maintain his splendor. No one else should possess the most beautiful maiden who had ever entered the gates of Bagdad.

So he said calmly, "She is good; Selim will repay thee;" and then commanded the trio from his presence. The merchant departed with his reward in golden shekels, and the girl was Abdallah's. Never did chief eunuch or grand chamberlain strive more heartily to please his sovereign than did Selim to make happy the lovely Zima. Her palace, within its jasper gates.

> "Was all of alabaster white,
> And of the red coralle;"

for the one symbolized her purity, the other her blushing modesty. Roseate taffetas, embroidered with silver nightingales, hung around her couch; and sculptured Peris sang in the per-

fumed waters of many fountains. But Zima shed a tear for every drop that fell from the Peri's wings. Yes, every day she wept, and every day she dried her tears, and recalled her smiles when she was sent for to go into the golden halls of Abdallah. She sang to him, she danced before him, she chanted to him the mountain stories of her land, she lavished smiles upon him bright as the new light of the orient, and every day she was sent back to her couch without an embrace or kind caress. "I am loathsome to him," said she, passionately, to Selim; "he will not even touch me. I have come from home and friends to him, and he will never love me."

"He does not hate thee," said Selim, warmly; "but woe if he should ever love thee."

One day Zima threw herself at Abdallah's feet, and when she saw the horror with which he started back, she begged that he would send her home to her native land, or take her to the great bazaar that she might be sold to some one, may be less wealthy than himself, but with a heart to love and cherish her. Abdallah was moved by her tears, and said, "Zima, reach me your hand!" She stretched to him an arm soft and white as a snow wreath. He clasped the small wrist between his thumb and finger; and when he had withdrawn his grasp, she saw the circlet like a golden bracelet on her arm. "You see,"

said he, "that, if I should take you to my arms, it would be as a ruined if not a lifeless creature. Tempt me no more, for there are moments when the demon within would gladly sacrifice you thus. Away! away!"

Zima sank upon the floor with her shining locks hardly brighter than its polish, for she was overcome with fear, horror, gratitude, and wonder. "My poor dear master!" she exclaimed; and Selim groaned a prayer. Then the Arab raised her to lead her away; but Abdallah stopped him, thus:—

"Selim, you have been to me as a son or a brother, and Zima is mine. I have a right to her as if she were my child. I can live but little longer. Take her now, that she may be your wife." But Zima said, "Not yet; for I must first find the cure for your sorrows."

So Selim led her away to the coral palace, with its alabaster walls; and all night long she lay awake thinking of Abdallah. But when the sun arose, throwing its first rays among the shadows that slept like mountain masses behind the curtains, the sight recalled an old vision and legend of her youth, and she smiled with all her former radiance. She sent messengers for Selim, and when he was come, she said, "There is living, away in the mountains of Armenia, a holy monk, who believes in a prophet greater than

Mohammed He has power against all demons and all diseases. Go to him for the talisman that alone can preserve Abdallah."

"But who," responded Selim, "will save his life till I return?"

"Let him be my care," answered Zima. "I will do all that you can do. I will strive to do more."

"What, you? alone too! so young, so tender, and no one else must know the mystery of the golden touch."

"Fear not for me!" said Zima. "I am strong and hopeful. But take for yourself gold for all necessities, and the swiftest steed of your country. And then," she concluded, with a sad smile, "spare neither the horse nor his rider!"

While Selim was gone for the swiftest horse in Bagdad, Zima walked on into the gardens, where she found a stalk with fair apples in a cluster, and a ringed worm gnawing on a leaf. She plucked the fruit, and passed on to the roses, where she gathered the most beautiful flower with its hundred leaves, fresh and strong, folded like a dahlia; and a bee was filling its honey-cups from a newly-opened bud. Then she sought admission to Abdallah's presence, and pointing with a smile to the life-encircling bracelet on her arm, she begged that she might witness his power on her fresh gatherings. Abdallah

took the flower from her hand, and when he returned it, bee, bud, and blossom were of solid gold. Likewise he changed the fair fruit, with the leaf and worm, and gave them back to Zima. When she parted from Selim, she gave these to him, as memorials for her own home, which were to convince her parents of her wealth and happiness. Selim promised to leave them there, as he should stop to learn of the monk's cavern. Then she returned to Abdallah, and told him that Selim had gone to a magician greater than the demon, who could break the spell of the golden touch; and she would nurse him during the days or weeks that the Arab might be gone. But Abdallah groaned and said, "I shall never see my gentle Selim more!"

It was a wearisome task that Zima had undertaken — to feed him as you would give nauseous medicine to a sick child; to cool those limbs with endless fanning, which water might never touch; to soothe those nerves so sore and feeble; to support the mind, so dark and gloomy; to cheer the heart, so faint and wretched. Sometimes she feared the old man would fall upon her neck and die; and sometimes that Selim might never return in safety. But Selim did come; and though the monk would not return with him, and had expressed little sympathy for Abdallah, saying, "He who had coveted the

riches of Solomon should experience the tender mercies of the worst genii of Solomon!" yet in answer to Selim's prayers he had given him a flask of holy water. This was for relief, not for cure. Zima took the flask, and with it she sprinkled the couch of Abdallah. Again it became a soft bed, and he lay down and slumbered. She moistened with it his parched lips, and bathed his hands and face. O, how rejoiced was he to feel so like his former self! With renewed strength he swept his long mantle across the golden floors, and wooed the breezes to his brow. He could have embraced Selim, he could have blessed Zima, but that the curse of the golden touch was still upon him. But he mounted again his chariot, and coursed through the city, showering gold upon the poor, who craved his charity, and seeking to relieve the sick and destitute. But the precious bottle wasted fast; and again Selim mounted his swift courser for a journey to the monk of the mountain. Again, after many earnest petitions, his boon was granted, and he returned to relieve the labors of Zima, and to cheer her with messages from her home, where the wealth that Abdallah had given them for her had made them all so thankful and so happy. And thus, together, they preserved the merchant's life till the year was past. Then, on the next day, Abdallah called

for the old casket, containing his former wealth, and turning the key, he invoked the demon. Again the vision grinned before him, with his helmet of shapeless ore, and the golden glow flaming through the rents of earthen crust that veiled him; and he said, "I have come, Abdallah, as I promised, *to renew the golden touch!*"

"Avaunt, fiend!" cried Abdallah. "You promised to recall it if I wished!"

"Great is gold!" said the imp, mockingly.

"God alone is great!" responded Abdallah; and as he said this the fiend paled and quivered.

"Old man," said he, angrily, "you do not then keep the profits of your last year's bargain. All that you have gained from me returns to me."

"Take all then," said Abdallah, firmly,— "this casket, if you wish. I will have no more of you."

"All is mine," said the fiend, musingly — "all but that which was *given* away. That has done its work of blessing, and cannot be recalled."

Then there arose around Abdallah the cry of "Fire! fire!" and in the smothering smoke and flames the demon disappeared. Abdallah leaped through the window, and saw the light tongues of flame lapping the curtains of Zima's palace. But the slave herself and Selim were at his feet. "I have saved your life, and your reputation too, my master," said the Bedouin. "When I saw the

change commence, I knew the result of your conference with the demon, and lighted myself the flame that should consume the vestiges of his necromancy. All others have fled, but Zima is with me, here." And, through the smouldering embers, Abdallah saw too that his old casket lay unharmed. His former gains, that once had looked so great, and then so paltry in his sight, were now to provide for these his children, and for his old age. "Take the casket," said he to Selim, "and do with me as you will."

There was little sympathy expressed for Abdallah's loss, for all supposed it could easily be repaired. And Selim's heart sickened at the great city, with its wealth of gold and its callous inhabitants. So he took the casket, and bought camels and horses for his master's journey to the desert, a retinue befitting his late state rather than his present means. And with the morning sun they turned their backs upon Bagdad, and their faces towards Sahara. They travelled long and far; and, during the night encampments, he told Zima of the free life of the wandering tribes of Arabia; of their scorn of gold, and love for the lights of heaven; of the lavender and rosemary, that grew up by the springs in the oases; of the milk-white steeds, who stood in the door of his father's tent, and ate from the hands of his little sisters; of the patient camels, who nibbled

thistles along the parched wayside; and of the great tribe, who would welcome her as the bride of its young sheik.

And Abdallah, too, rejoiced, like the two young pilgrims before him, in the prospect of a new life, where poverty with freedom would be their portion.

So Selim brought Zima to his mother's tent, and she became his wife. Children were born to them; sons grave and beautiful as Mohammed, and daughters wise and gentle as Zenobia. Abdallah lived to bless and name their babes; and then he died, and was buried by a fountain in the desert, where the palm trees waved and the fresh grass clustered.

They bore him to his grave beneath a shadowy pall of ostrich plumes, and pillowed his head on his old casket. The legend says it was full when they discarded it, as on the day Abdallah first invoked the demon; but they feared its influence, and despised its treasure. So they buried it, saying, "Gold is mighty, but God alone is great!"

"A second edition of King Midas," said Ben; "and after Mr. Hawthorne has dressed him over so genteelly."

Fred said his cousin was but lately accusing him of neglect of classic lore, and this charge he thought inconsistent with that. But, to tell the truth, he was more indebted to Ben himself than to any other one. It was a certain speech of his that had started the train, which he had only to follow on, and the story was the result. He had not thought of King Midas; indeed, he had never reached his kingdom in his slight classic researches; nor known of him, only as all must know, from the allusions to him in general literature. He was still more innocent respecting Mr. Hawthorne, whose story he did not know of till Ellen brought the book to him when he was almost done; for she had seen, through a sly peep over his chair back, that his story had precisely the same title, forestalled by the Lenox mythist. Out of deference to him, therefore, he had changed his *head*, and he did not know what more could be asked of him.

They all acknowledged that Fred had made out a good defence. Ben had noticed the quotation from himself, but as he was not a mean fellow, he had refrained from any allusion to it, perfectly willing to resign any thing which, he said, "grew so much better in the hands of another."

Phil had not the least doubt but that some King Midas had reigned over a scroll or two in

the Alexandrian library. He was glad that he had found his way out; and that, through Egypt and Greece, he had come into Massachusetts. He deserved to be universally popular; and they would find no fault with his present representative, Abdallah, merchant of Bagdad.

There was no more said about the matter by the older folks; but Ellen and Katie had got hold of a certain little "Wonder Book," and were making comparisons that pleased themselves exceedingly. At Fred's request, they delivered the book to him; and, long after they had gone to their rooms, he sat perusing the story, which he had been accused of making the model of his own.

Evening Sixth.

It was Eva's turn to read a story. She was thought to have the most difficult taste, and the least ready fancy, of any one member of the party. So there was considerable anxiety felt to know — not how she would please them, but how she would be able to satisfy herself.

Sophy had reported three different stories commenced and cast aside; one, "The Mask and Mirror;" another, "The Mystic Island;" and a third, the best of all, "The Purple Grotto." There was poetry in it; she had read a few lines in a mermaid's song —

> "And the oar to the shore,
> Shall be turned nevermore."

But Eva shook her head at her, and put an end to the quotation. Eva then said that the story was too extravagant, and she had not liked it. She did not know that she had done any better. Her present sketch had no claims to originality; it was but a new way of telling an old story.

They had all received Fred's effort so kindly

that she hoped they would be quite as partial to her own.

Ben thought, as her manuscript did not look at all bulky, they might perhaps be favored with the fragments of "The Mask and Mirror," and the other literary et ceteras; but Eva said, if she fulfilled her task of finding them *one* story, they might be very grateful.

"Thankful for smallest favors!" said Ben, winking towards the thin-leaved, delicately traced manuscript of Eva, which looked, indeed, rather unpromising for aught but a brief entertainment.

But Fred hinted that "The Quadruple Pleasure" would be forthcoming; and with this expectation they settled themselves to listen to her story entitled

THE SPIRIT BUD.

AN INDIAN LEGEND.

"MOTHER of the Wise Word, and daughter of the Northern Star, come to my couch, and bend thy lips to mine ear! Take my babe to thy heart; and tell me what pulses her soft touch stirs within thee. Her low murmurings shall weave a dream before thine eyes, and thou shalt tell me what thy gaze espies beyond the clouds of the Hidden Land."

Thus spake an Indian queen to the wise woman, who had long been a sojourner with her tribe; and she laid her new-born child to the heart of the withered sibyl.

"Speak, mother; thy words shall be my medicine. Let the Great Spirit whisper to me through the voice of the Driven Wind!"

"Daughter of many kings, and wife of the Mighty Arm, I see beyond me the shores of the Hidden Land; and the spirits of the future are unveiled before mine eyes. I see,—but that which I look upon the Drooping Elm should never seek to know."

"I must! I must! the coming time is dark

before thy gaze; but I must know of that which is all unveiled to the Driven Wind!"

"The speech of the Driven Wind is never soft; and her voice is hard, like that of an angry spirit. Do not force her to interpret her ravings."

"The Drooping Elm has learned to bow to every blast. Though she would feign shadow this new bud with her swaying boughs, yet she will learn to yield it back to the Great Spirit, and murmur softly, like a ravished bird, her plaintiveness to the summer air. The Driven Wind need not fear to search through all her branches."

"I see," replied the wise woman, hesitating. "I see, also, that the Driven Wind is to take the new bud from the Drooping Elm, as the sun lifts the mist from the placid river. It shall be well. But tell me, O Driven Wind, of the land where the bud shall blossom; of the sea where the mist shall rest again in silver brightness.

"I see," said the medicine woman, "the tender bud grow strong and beautiful, beneath the shadow of the Drooping Elm. She openeth her leaves, and becometh a beauteous blossom; her fragrance filleth her father's lodge, and the dancing shadows are bright around her. The blossom is borne on the monarch's breast, and the Drooping Elm lifteth aside her branches, that all may look to see the beauty beneath the shadow of them."

"Doth the bud remain? Is it taken hence? and where? Do the young warriors seek it? Is it borne away on the conqueror's lance or spear?"

"I see the warriors hasten to her father's lodge. There are black shadows cast upon their brows by the flitting council fire. They turn away to the hunting grounds, and come back with furs of the panther and shaggy wolf. They lay their gifts at the door of the monarch's lodge. They twine garlands of eagles' claws around the Drooping Elm; but they are dismissed without the fragrant flower for which they came. One now returns with bloody hands, and lance tasselled with the scalp lock of his rivals. The cougar is his manitou, and the glance of his eye is like a shooting star."

"Do they not give to him the bud? the blossom?"

"I see him depart with his own heart's blood, like angry fires, mounting to his cheeks and brow. The Drooping Elm still shadows the perfumed bud.

"It is enough: the voice of the Driven Wind shall sink now within the branches of the Drooping Elm."

"Nay, it is not enough! Thou seest the bud as it blights beneath the Drooping Elm! Thou seest it fall! Is not the Elm strong? Are not her branches firm and her leaves young? Do

not fear to speak, as to a rotten weed. The voice of the Driven Wind is loud and fresh. I would hear it yet again. Where goeth the blossom?"

"I have seen many moons silvering the Drooping Elm since the bud grew from her heart. Is it not well? My words are done."

"The Driven Wind pierceth even to the Spirit Land. Tell me yet more of that thou knowest!"

"I see a pale face coming from the Spirit Land. His brow is calm, like a snow-laden cloud; and his eye like the deep-blue river. His foot is on the roaring seas; but mighty wings bear him forward to the shores of our hunting grounds. He layeth his wings upon the waters and cometh forth; but not alone. There are many clouds upon that scene, or my eyes are growing dim; but I see ——"

"Tell me what does the pale spirit do?"

"I see the bud borne far from the Drooping Elm. Her boughs hang listless o'er her lodge, and the murmurs of her leaves have a new sorrow in them."

"Tell me, O Driven Wind, cannot thine eye pierce onward to the bounds of the Spirit Land? O, tell me where my bud shall blossom!"

"The pale face lifteth again his mighty wings, and the bud is borne across the waters. They pass unfaltering through the clouds, and heed not

the winds that would turn them from their course. They catch the roughest gales, and bind them to those wings: they fear not the monsters of the deep, nor do they pause at the mysterious lands which rise amid the waters. At length they reach the happy hunting grounds."

"Tell me, O Driven Wind, what seest thou in that land?"

"It riseth from the golden waves like a lily from the scented lake. How shall I speak of all its glory? Its rocky cliffs are white and strong, like the tooth necklace on the soft bosom of a bride. Its simplest lodges are more beautiful than the home of the Drooping Elm; and some are smooth and hard, like the polished egg of the turtle. The light shines in them through an ice that never melts, and brightest flowers lie always before their steps. The birds sing ever in their trees; the waters spring upward to cool their brows; the streams sing pleasantly through their green banks; and they lie down on couches that seem hollowed from sunset clouds."

"But tell me of my bud. Is she there alone?"

"She is not alone. The pale spirits are about her, thick as the birds in a blooming wood. They clothe her like themselves, in skins softer than the hide of the tenderest fawn, that shine like the web spun at night in the dew-gemmed

grass. They place upon her breast and in her hair the tiny icicles that are never cold; and all about are shining, like herself, in many tinted lights, like a thick forest after a summer rain. Their seats are softer than the flowery moss; and they drink sweet, sparkling, but not human blood, from bowls like the light of the midday sun, shining up from laughing waters."

"Does *she* look happy?"

"There is a light upon her brow, such as I have never seen a maiden wear before."

"Is the Drooping Elm in that happy land?"

"Her bud is there before her. I see no further. It is enough — I will look no longer!"

Such was the revelation to Drooping Elm, the graceful Indian queen, as she sought to divine the future of her babe. Thenceforward she called her child the Spirit Bud, though the king had named her Matoaka.

She grew very beautiful, and was loved as few in any home can be. But as she became older, and the words of Driven Wind were whispered in her ear, she seemed very grave, as though the air from a glacier had rested on the flowers of her childhood. But with this gravity there was a sweetness like the south wind that melts through snow clouds: so while her hand was in the tendrils of the Drooping Elm, and her feet trod lightly over the floor of her father's

lodge, her eye was oft away over the waters, straining its gaze to the Spirit Land.

She wove the wampum belt for her father's loins, and stitched the bright-stained quills through her mother's robe; but when her tasks were done, she played with the birds and flowers, and chanted to them her questions of the Spirit Land. And when the warriors came with their gifts of game and furs, with their scalp girdles from the wars, or their fierce trophies from the chase, her heart took no pleasure in them, for she saw in her dreams the pale face with the mighty wings, who should make her soon his bride. Drooping Elm said, "It is but a little time thou wilt be here; and I cannot spare thee from my side!" and the king was in no haste to betroth his favorite child. They let her roam among the hills, and trace the channels of the streams unchecked; for they knew that in solitude her heart would best strengthen itself for its separation from them all, and prepare with deep communings for its entrance to the Spirit Land.

One day Driven Wind came to Drooping Elm, and said, —

"Where is Spirit Bud? for I fain would speak to her."

Drooping Elm gave her child to the wise woman, and said, "Is her time near?"

Driven Wind shook her head doubtfully; but

she took the girl away. They went afar, and climbed to a high hill, where the distant ocean broke in shining billows upon the landscape.

"Spirit Bud," said she, "I have dreamed again, but the voices in my sleep were as the speech of a stranger's tongue. I heard it like the whisperings of a far-off echo; and I knew only that the words were of the happy land and thee!"

"Is the pale face coming for me, O Driven Wind?"

"He cometh! yes, he cometh! We shall see the wavings of his mighty wings upon the farthest waters. But there is something very strange. Spirit Bud, you are to go to the happy land with the pale face; but he will first lay back his wings upon the waters, and sojourn here a while with you. The Spirit Bud will still be near us and around us, but not wholly of us. Your father's brow will grow dark, and his heart will light up with angry fires. The Drooping Elm will bend with fear, and her leaves will waste upon the ground.

"From the Spirit Bud must come a shield for the pale face's safety; and if harm come to him, the Great Spirit will send his vengeance across the waters, to overwhelm this land."

"I will be faithfu to the pale face who shall come and claim me. But there is not yet a

speck upon the farthest waters. There is still much time for me to listen to thy words. Tell me, O Driven Wind, what else thou seest."

"Spirit Bud, I see this land, when thou hast passed away, and when even the last footprints of thy race have faded from its surface."

"Doth it then become a silent land?"

"Not so; but pale faces come thickly between the sea and sky, and the whole land is given to these mightier spirits. They build the beauteous lodges of their happy land where now our wigwams stand; and even the forests bow to the ground before them. Their wings are lifted up over all its streams and seas, and they ride across its prairies upon monsters, who breathe fire and smoke, as they glide with a serpent's undulating swiftness around the hills and through the valleys. They weave a loose, bright netting in the air, on which the lightnings speed to bear their messengers; and their fiery monsters fight the spray across the waters. They go up towards the sun and stars in giant bubbles, which you may scarce conceive, and gaze at the moon with an eye longer than their bodies."

"But, O Driven Wind, where are we? Where are the dark-browed children of our sires?"

"Hath not the Great Spirit many homes for his offspring? May they not be where the hunting grounds are ever filled with game? where the

sun doth not scorch with heat in summer, and the wintry winds are never cold? He has taken them to a better land than this; and that it is even now prepared, doth not the hunter know, whose glance hath long rested on the purple shadows of the 'Fountain Isle'? The Great Spirit is very good: he hath guarded that home with serpents, like mighty rivers; and their giant sentinels watch there with sleepless eye, like a mountain with the full moon shining on its highest peaks."

"Driven Wind, thou who tellest so much of the future, surely thou canst say something of the past. What has been its voice to thee?"

"There was a time," she replied, "long ere I was the Driven Wind and the Great Spirit whispered in my dreams, when I was like a breeze asleep within a blossom, and when there was a present, that now is a dim past, like the song of a rill whose waters are dried up, whose echoes are on the winds of another year. I was the full stream whose voice is merry music. I was, in my mother's lodge, like a bird upon a flowery bough. For me the young warriors pranced their steeds across the hunting grounds, and threw away their lives to the grisly bear or catamount. There was one who was called the 'Bloody Hand,' in our tribe, for the game fell in his path if he but beckoned to them. He went to the

battle, that he might bring home scalps to deck a lodge for me, his bride. While he and his friends were gone, my father was conquered in the fight. I was taken prisoner, and my life spared because of my beauty. I saw my father, my mother, my young brothers burned in withering flames, and I heard their shouts of defiance end in stifled moanings. Was not this enough to scorch the pure thoughts of my youth, and make me like a tree which the lightning has blackened? I was given to an aged chief, to be his slave. I toiled for him, and received blows from his other wives. But I forgave him all his scornful words, for he was the father of my child. One night, as I lay upon the elk skin in my lodge, listening to the old songs in my head, and hearing, through my baby's breath, the new song in my heart, I heard another music. There was a form between my eyes and the glare of coals upon the hearth. I took my child in my arms, and went out into the moonlight, with a beating at my heart which might have been loud enough to step the war dance by. I saw him, the Bloody Hand! and, with a spring at my child, he crushed its little life from its bosom. I sank upon the ground, and thick darkness came upon me. When morning came, I awoke, but he was gone."

The voice of the Driven Wind was silent, and

Spirit Bud asked, "Did you never see him more?"

"Never: I heard that he had escaped his captors, that he was now the chief of our old tribe, and that another wife slept in his lodge. After that, I wandered far away to the sky of milder stars, and began to listen to the Great Spirit calling in my dreams."

"O Driven Wind, it was not of this past, whose fiery scroll lies close against your living heart, that I questioned. It was that, so far back in the ages gone, as distant as the future when the pale face shall seem as the spirits returned of our departed tribes."

"When I was young, like you, sweet Spirit Bud, I too asked of the far-off past, and of its echoes and shadows. There was a time when all this land was free for the moose, bear, and buffalo to be the sovereigns of it. The red man was first remembered, afar in the home of shining snows, where the giants of that time sought to make of him a slave forever. But the blood and sinews, which toil for another, were never in his frame. So he was scourged, and pierced, and tortured with ice and fire. When the cold winds made a strong floor of the deep waters, the red man fled across it, to the green plains and pale-blue waters. He came to a better country, where the forests were thick, and filled

with game. The giants followed them with heavy tread. Their voices were like many thunders, and their glances like the lightning's flash. But the Great Spirit stopped them in their way. He fastened their huge feet into the earth, and commanded the winds to shroud them in sands. Their awful forms are still there. Their shaggy hides are now a tangled forest. Their skulls are as strong cliffs. Their white scalps shine in never-thawing ice. Their grass-grown sides are filled with venomous beasts. The rumblings of their bowels are heard no more. Their flaming tongues have long dropped off; their tears are ever-flowing rivers; and their limbs are swallowed in the bowels of the earth. They remain there forever!"

"O Driven Wind, didst thou ever see them?"

"Yea, long since, in my youth. There is one whose face, now turned to stone, stands always out against the sky, showing how he would have turned back; whose giant origin is not concealed. Even in years to come, the pale face will see him as the far-riding hunter sees him now, and will still call him the 'Old Man of the Mountain.' He is a monument placed by the Great Spirit, who overcometh the enemies of his children."

"The red men feared the giants then no more."

"Nay, they jeered and scorned them; and, in the forests, with the game, or by the sea

shore, they lived the life of free and favored children."

"O Driven Wind, look! it is even as thou hast said! the mighty wings are lifted on the line between the sea and sky;" and Spirit Bud dropped her face into her trembling hands.

"The Spirit Bud has a keener eye than mine, so old and dim; but I do not doubt its seeing."

So there they watched till the white wings grew larger, and came nearer, and then they descended the height, to meet the pale face at the shore; but the step and look of Spirit Bud were like those of a nun who goeth forth to her Christ espousal.

Little need we tell here of the welcome they gave the pale face, nor of her father's greeting. Powhatan looked upon the white men with a mixture of awe and fear, which was not fully understood; and Matoaka, or Pocahontas, was the only one whose heart leaped up to theirs in sympathy. She was saving a long-loved idol when she preserved the life of Smith, and that she had so much influence was owing to their remembrance of the old prophecy; and on wedding John Rolfe, she but gave herself to one who had long possessed her hoping heart. She did not forget the words of Driven Wind, as

she gazed around on all the pomp of England's court; and she felt that it was indeed the happy land. But she learned of them to look with other gaze upon the spirit world, to see there the Father of all, both red and white; and, in the faith of a glorious immortality, the vision of a heaven where it should bloom forevermore, she folded in death the Spirit Bud.

"Pocahontas! Pocahontas!" they all exclaimed. The old story over again, but pretty well told, notwithstanding.

Ben thought that the mermaids had better be brought forward, as possibly doing more credit to her originality; but Eva would not submit them to the test.

Fred, Sophy, and Katie were comparing notes for some minutes, to know which had discovered Pocahontas first. Sophy said she knew all as soon as a "pale face" was mentioned. Fred was sure of the whole when he had fairly recognized England; Katie when Powhatan was called up; and Ellen was not sure until Captain Smith and John Rolfe were brought before them; but their mother had known all the way from "Matoaka."

The little girls asked if Pocahontas had really

any other name than this; and Eva said there were at least two more. Pocahontas seemed to be her royal name, by which she was known to the English; Matoaka her home, or purely Indian name; and Rebecca was the name by which she was baptized into the Christian church. What was the meaning of her Indian names Eva could not tell.

But now came the quadruple pleasure, as Ben had called it, when the Enchanted Horse, with other drawings, was to be brought forward. Yes, they all liked Mynheer; he looked so sad, and meek, and so knowing withal.

Old Abdallah and Zima were but sketched, with Selim in the background; but they were well done, so far. The children had hoped the "demon" would be portrayed; but Zima was certainly much the more beautiful there, as she cried out, "My poor dear master."

Aunt Mary's "Clerk of the Weather" satisfied all parties; the little ones could not enough admire him. Ben acknowledged that his conception had been justly dealt by, so far as it was possible for mortal crayons to embody him; the only fault had been his own, in describing him beyond the power of fingers to delineate. And no one contradicted the conceited fellow.

Eva, as usual, had been fastidious, and busy also with her story. Her fairies were not finished

to her mind. She had two slight sketches, one of Rose leaning from her blossoms, with Moss advancing, enveloped in his lichen cap and cloak; but this did not suit, and another fancy was tried; where Rose, *in propria persona*, is receiving the encirling embrace of her new companion. This, when finished, they all thought, would be as pretty as it could be; and "when our stories are printed," said Ellen, "we will have these pictures in the book." Lopez and the fountain were faintly traced by Lottie, with the swans on the lake and the lilies on their stems. "Yes, there were all the lilies," — Katie said she could see them, — "the arum and all the rest."

The pictures afforded them so much amusement, that it was even later than usual before they were ready to retire, though Eva's story had not detained them long.

There were a few questions to be answered about the "Old Man of the Mountain;" who, it was averred, was still in existence, and as large as ever.

Phil had seen him in his pedestrian tour to the Franconia Notch, and said he might be easily taken for a giant turned into stone, and mossed over with shrubs and forests.

Katie and Ellen said they should now enjoy, more than ever, their promised visit to the White

Mountains, for they should be so "glad to see this now harmless company of giants——"

"Put their nightcaps on," added their mother and they needed no further hint to leave the room.

Evening Seventh.

"Now commences *the second season*," said Ben, "or Part Second of our book. The juveniles have each accomplished their appointed task, and it cannot be that their seniors will fail. Aunt Mary, you are the youngest of the other party, the nearest, of course, to ours, and will therefore come next in order."

"I and my husband are one," replied aunt Mary. "He has written a story; and I have been so busy sketching the accompanying drawing, that I have had no time to write. I will not be delinquent to-morrow evening."

"Pray, uncle Charles, will you oblige us?" said Phil, and Eva, and all the rest.

Uncle Charles looked as though such matters were rather below his dignity; but his good nature was not quite obscured in his professional cares, and he took a package from his pocket, tied with red tape, and looking marvellously, Ben thought, like some communication for the "Medical Journal."

"A very interesting case of paralysis," said

he; "or is it a report of some congestion of the brain?"

"It was suggested by an *affection of the heart*," replied their uncle, good naturedly, as he began to read of **Hans the Doctor**, or

THE VIAL IMPS.

Hans was a doctor in prospective only, but still studying and theorizing for lack of the practice people do not seem disposed to give to those who most need it — the young and penniless. Experience, that old fellow, with white hair and expanded brow, comes through so many sloughs and quagmires to his favorites, that people have learned to trust his seams, and scars, and wrinkles — to look for the best diplomas among the stains and patches of his garments; and they resign few valuables, little of that greatest treasure, life or health, to the smooth cheek and unsoiled garment. So Hans might still as well have called himself an apothecary's clerk, for that was the position his good community seemed to have assigned him.

Hans, moreover, was called a *lazy* student: he was seen sporting in the forests, and fishing by the rivers, dissecting butterflies, and analyzing crickets, when he might better, they thought, have been feasting his brains through mental digestion, with the marrow of old Æsculapius, of the mighty doctors, who had filled vast tomes now in his master's library. But why should

Hans lumber his head with many theories, and the thousand vagaries which — who can decide, where doctors disagreed? Why should he study who already knew so much, that would be in time forgotten for want of the best reminders? Why not collect insect mummies, as the patients cured, who stand monuments of a physician's lore and skill, would not be at all displaced? Why should *he* blind his eyes over the midnight lamp, who would now do just as well to tend the shop and grind the mortars, if he had never studied half so much? Just as well, and better; for had it not been for the fishes, and butterflies, and pheasants, who were Hans's new studies, he would have been all the more discontented at the thought of talents wasted, learning underrated.

He who knew as well how to wind up a skeleton, and take apart a manikin, as to behead a wasp, or dismember a grasshopper, felt that the bodies of men were transparent to his gaze, and their diseases tangible to his touch. He would have amputated an arm as he would strip a beetle of its wing, or have bored a hole through a crushed breast bone as he would have taken a cork from a sealed bottle.

But people trusted their limbs and lives only to the gray-haired Eckhardt; and Hans might roam the woods, or splash the waters, as the humor suited him.

Hans came to his shop one night quite stiff and weary. A cold rain had met him in the forest; so he kindled a fire in his little furnace, and then lay back upon the lounge, to dry his clothes and rest his limbs. He lay there a long time; but it seemed that every joint grew stiffer as the hours slipped by; he could not move, and though his head ached from weariness, he could not sleep. The little clock struck twelve, and Hans had not lowered an eyelid.

"Rather a comfortless place!" thought he, "to spend the night;" and he wished he had gone at first to his lodgings, all dripping as he was. The muddy shoes and soaking blouse might have provoked a landlady's frowns, or a servant's pouts; but these would have been agreeable offsets to neuralgia in the head, or rheumatism in the bones. He was too stiff to shiver, and too cold to sleep, and the furnace now had ceased to temper the air, or add to his comfort.

But by and by the young man became conscious of manœuvres about him that quite put to flight all thoughts of furnace, rheumatism, neuralgia, or self-observance, in any way. There was a clatter when the still, small hours came on, as if each vial were a vital; as if each medicine within had in truth become a living remedy.

Hans turned his eyeballs higher, towards the

shelves, where powders, pills, and many-colored solutions stood, row over row, in fearful variety, with their strange names in gilded letters, but a dead language, labelled on their fronts; and his hair would have risen on end, if it had not previously been frozen down, at the thought of all these divers powers endowed with vitality, and allowed to wreak their humors upon him. There was not a friendly aspect in a single countenance, with all its transparent revelations; and Hans felt the new coldness of fear in his chilled members, as memories of hard thoughts, harsh words, and stupid witticisms came over him; thoughts of mocking laughs, as he had rolled the pills, and sly sarcasms, as he had mixed the powders. Were they coming out to be revenged upon him? Clatter, clatter, clatter! and the covers were lifted simultaneously, while an imp for every vial came out from its imprisonment. Not in uniform, however, did they appear, nor was their advent at the same moment. Some leaped from the pills like snap bugs, as the covers rose; some came slowly, writhing from the powdery mass, like worms from stiff soils; some floated upward from the tinctures and liquors, like a light boat from overwhelming waves. Some curved gracefully about, while others skipped and jerked with horrible contortions. Some had faces expressive of terrible power and poisonous malice

some were bitter and sour in every look, while others were quite torpid and inane, save when they mingled with others of equal stupidity, in their several individualities. Some were strongly odorous of distant lands, and others had a sepulchral smell from the bowels of the earth. Some possessed a slight but pleasing perfume, while others neutralized that with noisome smokes, that, to Hans, appeared to have been derivable only from the infernal regions themselves. Some were in gay draperies, while others wore the dingy hues of old ores, and ochres, or the smutty oxides of the mine.

The green Cantharides came buzzing and biting about him, so that he was almost demented with their noise; but Hans knew them all as they capered through the room; Arsenic, Rhubarb, Calomel, Tartar, Quinine, Ipecacuanha, and the rest; indeed, each preserved, through his transformation, a likeness to the ore, or plant, or tree, or animal, from which his existence had been derived. And they knew him! That was evident enough, for one snapped pills at him as boys shoot peas; others shook burning solvents over him in slow drops, as they counted the falling torments. Some smothered him with puffs of light powder, and others spouted water from their mouths towards him as he would press a syringe. Some brought plasters for his

mouth, and plugs for his ears and nostrils; some spread burning blisters over his skin; some stabbed his veins, while others shaved him bald, and racked his joints or twisted his bowels. And there he must remain, so helpless and passive, while the imps practised their *diablerie* with impunity. If they would only shut his eyes, and numb his senses, there would be some alleviation; but with those loathsome forms before his sight, and their wretched jargon booming, racketing through his brain, he only wished they would kill him outright, and have it over. Even his favorite, little Belladonna, had rudely joined their pranks, while stupid Laudanum maliciously kept away.

Then the old books unclosed their long-used visors, and looked out with staring E's and O's upon the mischief; and every volume had derision broadly imprinted on the face of it. "Et tu, Brute!" thought Hans. "And thou, brute!" he repeated angrily, as every leaf rustled with pleasure, and each dog's ear was pricked up with unwonted animation. The old black text seemed ominous with cabalistic warnings; and as the echoes of a distant cloister bell came in through the night stillness, the mortars seemed stimulated to a part in the ordeal. The pestles rose and fell, as he had often handled them; and the little one cried out with metallic shrillness, through its

successive blows, "Kill him quick! kill him quick!" while the great stone pounder groaned lazily, "Linger him long! linger him long!"

"Yes, they will kill me," thought Hans, within his heart; "but why not obey that dear little brass pestle, and put me instantaneously out of misery, instead of paying such deference to that flinty-hearted monster, who derives such pleasure from my torments? Yes, kill him quick! kill him quick! but do not linger him long!"

Hans did not know there could be other sufferings than he now experienced; but he was to be taught the depths of misery.

He saw them bring in, through door or window, he never knew how, a lovely babe. It was the last of many infants who had all besides it been taken from his brother. He saw them drug and torture it, till the strength was gone, and all its misery at an end. A fair young girl, the last and loveliest of their own loved band at home, was dragged before him. He saw the soft cheek burn with fever, and the slight limbs writhe with pain; he looked upon her gaping mouth and parched tongue; he heard her screech and plead for cooling water, yet they gave only their vile bitters for drink.

They brought his grandparents there; the only ones now, for other two were dead; and he saw them lift the drapery to jeer and shout over

the prints *her* body bore of blisters, wounds, and bleedings, while he was swollen with humors, and cracked with pain. Those aged ones, so sainted in his heart, he saw them tortured, as he and the others had been, only with a kinder cruelty; for all their misery was ended with death. "O, when," thought Hans, "may all this *diablerie* cease?"

And, as Hans asked this, there arose from the clear globe upon the table, where golden fishes once had sported in pure waters — from this element arose a fair spirit, robed with a thin, silvery sheen, like that the faint moon wears when she climbs the sky in open day. The silver spirit passed her hand over the limbs and brow of the poor fellow, and said to him, "Follow me."

Hans was too much rejoiced to feel the command of his limbs, and to leave the Vial Imps, to ask any questions as to the proposed excursion, and he followed his shining guide through the darkness.

Night was still over the town and brooding in the forests, but Hans saw through many windows, as though they all had been uncurtained to his gaze, the couches of the sick, the watches of the dying.

In one room, a mother hung alone over her sick child, while around her weary laborers slept. In another, a solitary invalid lighted

with tremulous hands her own small taper, and drank placidly the night draught beside her. In another, a father paced with bare feet his chamber floor with a screaming boy clinging to his frame, and all were awakened by his screeches. In yet another, a husband hung despairingly over a fainting wife, nor could he leave her for a moment to move aside for help.

"When will these miseries cease?" asked Hans, again. The silver spirit beckoned him on, and they passed through the town to the forest, and journeyed through the morning twilight, over many miles, till they came to the mountain region. Hans clambered through the deep defiles, and strode on through the green passes, behind his leader, until they came to a crystal palace, all glittering upon the heights there in the morning sun. High, glassy pillars, which, in their ductile state, had been grooved, twisted, or braided, supported the broad shining roof; and, because there were no trees around, the waters had been guided from numerous falling torrents, cascades, and cataracts, to fountains that played loftily in their strong, exquisite beauty. There was a tree, and here a shower of diamonds; anon a tulip gushed upward, and then a broad fan spread coolness; and thus the pure waters played in rich abundance, in graceful variety.

Through the cold avenues, over the marble pavements, Hans wandered with the spirit; and then, over a waterfall, and under the arch of a mammoth fountain, they passed within the courts of the palace. Crystal basins held waters, through which the mimic fountains played; and silver spirits were sporting in the morning brightness, with myriad glancing rainbows, as children play the graces.

Leaving all these behind, Hans passed to the great hall, or throne room, of the palace. Within the radiant circle sat the queen of all this magnificence, in the quiet simplicity of true greatness. Her robes, of changing green and blue, shone through the misty tissue that veiled her. Daisies and clover blooms were studded thick upon her trail; the thistle down embroidered her cobweb vest, and apple blossoms mingled in her hair. The silken tassels of the maize depended from her girdle, and a garland of buttercups threw a golden glory over her white neck. The heart's ease nestled in her bosom, the perfume of violets was in her breath, the blue of the hyacinth was in her eyes, and her smile was like the opening of a fresh flower. She sat upon a hillock of new heather, and by her side was a crystal vase of ripened fruits. The brown nuts from the forest formed her rosary, and a little amulet, with which she played, was sculptured from some hard esculent.

She took no notice of Hans; but some movement of his silver spirit was assented to, and they passed through the high, cold halls to the wards of this great palace, this wondrous hospital.

They came to a mild, summer-like room, through which the sun was shining warmly, as if each window were a burning glass to concentrate its power. Hot baths, and those of tepid warmth, were here awaiting the invalid, while the white draperies and curling mists of incense made even sickness seem attractive. Here were brought many of the new comers, and Hans rejoiced with them as the medicated baths penetrated the citadels of their diseases.

From these rooms they entered those of clear, cold baths, where swathing, binding, washing, rubbing, dashing, ducking, spouting, laving, and showering, were employed in all their varieties. Hans loved to mark the rosy glow that came with exercise and water, and to see the bright sparkle of the eye, reflected as it were from the glowing element. Action, motion, the very music of convalescence, were in the atmosphere about him, and a bird-like fluttering was in the limbs of the feeblest there.

Again Hans came, with a shiver, to the great halls of excavated ice, where snow drifts were the baths, and frozen spray the showers. Here

strong men were wrestling with their ailments, till sweaty brows and burning cheeks proclaimed their victory.

The promenade was now over, and as Hans entered the farther court the silver spirit bowed and left him. He turned aside with the discharged patients, who had bent their faces towards the valleys. As Hans joined the buoyant crowd, what was his transport to see the baby child, the darling sister, the old grandparents there, that he had thought were tortured to death the night before — there, and all radiant with health, and exuberant with happiness! He embraced them with tears of joy, and blessed the goddess of the mountain, who was thus sending with them new life, like the streamlet's flow down into the low valleys. But as he danced along, an awkward step brought him to the ground, and his fall *awoke him.*

It was all a dream! born, so Hans told me, of a bad cold and hard bed; and he knew well what part of it, if not all, dated from the sunshine that had peeped through his window. So he was not surprised to find his vial safe and covered, nor his mortars standing still.

But it produced a great impression on him, or rather the success of the experiment he tried to drive away the rheumatic fever that followed this adventure; and he became one of the suc-

cessful hydropathists of the day. It is now no misnomer to call him Hans the Doctor.

"And do you really intend, Charles," asked their father, "to convey the idea that *you* prefer hydropathy to any other medical regimen?"

"Of course *not*, or I would get up my own 'Water Cure Establishment' immediately, and set Mary, here, to bathing and swathing all the women patients. But I intend in my practice to be a bold Eclectic, and get all the good I can find in any other theory. I have great faith in the recuperative properties of water, and intend to use it, and propose it as one of the most efficient salutary mediums.

"I shall neither slavishly adhere to Calomel and Quinine, — the former of which, I am confident, has done great harm, — nor shall I wholly renounce them where they might be of service to me.

"However," he added, laughing, "I suppose I am not to be held responsible for the dreams of my Dutch friend; and I am sure the little folks will be glad to look at Mary's portrait of the young doctor."

Aunt Mary, with true woman's tact, had it already for inspection, for she wished to save her

husband, as far as was in her power, from too close criticism.

It was truly diverting to look at her drawing, and I am sure all who are allowed to read these stories will be glad also to have this picture procured for them likewise. There were the Imps and the bottles, the books and the ghosts; the blister for Hans' stomach, and the pestle to pound his head. There were the spear to prick him, and the evil whisperer at his ear. And there was Belladonna, with her box of silvered pills, like so many fresh snow seeds; and there, too, was a little merciless wretch riding "Jack Horse" on the poor sleeper's knee.

Ellen looked for the Spanish flies, but her aunt told her she feared they were too small to be visible.

Even their father was pleased with the picture, or seemed to be, and ventured no objections to its allopathic satire.

He would "have a bathing room fitted up immediately," he said, "if all of them, uncle and aunt inclusive, would promise to go into the cold water every day."

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!" said Katie, running off with Ellen to their room. "Let the old folks try it first."

Evening Eighth.

Aunt Mary was ready for the expectant group, as they came in from a race in the bright moonlight; and while they were busy pulling off their Polish boots and Scotch comforters, she was unwinding a strip off from several manuscripts.

"Some of these are my school-girl themes," said she, "but I have vamped one of them over nicely for you, and called it 'La Mennai;' and here is one that is shorter, but prepared specially for the occasion. It is the 'Beggar's Curse.' Which will you like best?"

"We will like both best, as Ellen used to say, years ago," replied Ben.

"But which will you have?"

"Which can we get?" asked Ben.

"La Mennai!" exclaimed the little girls, "for you have drawn a picture to that:" and, to tell the truth, they felt somewhat afraid of the "Beggar's Curse."

So Ben poked the coals and Sophy brightened the lamp, while the rest were settling themselves to listen to the story, which was as follows: —

PETITE AND LA MENNAI.

Time was, though long ago, when even philosophers were children. The great round world looked new to them; and they went through it blundering and stumbling, feeling awkwardly their way, and ever catching hold of the slightest support. To test, if not to taste, was their way of ascertaining what were the ingredients of material objects; and most infantine were some of their experiments and explanations.

La Mennai was one of these old children, who dwelt in a simple hermitage at the foot of the Hartz Mountains.

By day he wandered through the glens, or scrambled up the peaks, studying, not so much the beauties as the wonders of the grand old hills; and at night he would return — to continue our juvenile comparison — to put his finger in his mouth, and dream over his new mental acquisitions. The poet has been called the olden child; but is not the philosopher, with his endless gropings over the world's floor, and around the walls of his strange tenement, with his staring eyes, prying fingers, curious heart, with his self-

questionings, and unceasing interrogatories of nature, is not he, too, the world's child? the baby of his age?

La Mennai was a great baby or a great fool; for so said all the shepherds of the Hartz. But he enjoyed his infancy, and only looked for full development when his swaddling clothes were laid aside, and he had mantled himself in those elastic robes which the soul loveth to wear forevermore.

One evening La Mennai had lighted his taper, and he sat as he might better have sat without having done it, ruminating upon the complex nature even of his simple home and world, and deciding within himself upon a higher mountain climb for the morrow than he had ever indulged himself with — a ramble which should furnish his mind with still newer matter to vex itself upon.

Then, also, he heard the forbidding hail rattle against his lattice. The patter of the storm beat a new reveille for the philosopher's wits, and called them forth upon a fresh forray in the speculative regions he had so often traversed. The hail! what was it? and the rain? the snow and the mist? What were they all? how wedded? how descended they one from the other? and which was progenitor? which the child?

Patter, patter, patter! click, click, clack! at the lattice, and La Mennai arose, as if to let the

urgent hailstones in. The opening of the little wicket was succeeded by a cold draught, in which entered the strangest little sprite that could be conceived. She was shining in a diamond suit of mail, of the thinnest laminæ of ice; the core of the snow mist was round her vest for pearls; a fully-radiated flake was on her breast, and another, edged with its tiny spray seeds, beseemed her coronet; a spear of icy spiculæ was in her hand; and certainly no Cinderilla ever had on such beautiful little glass slippers.

The little frost elf stood unmoved in the cold draught, and her piercing glance was fixed on La Mennai.

"Who and what are you?" questioned the philosopher.

"I am PETITE, am I not? for the rest you can see plainly what I am."

Then the little creature commenced hopping about the room like a hailstone in a storm; and La Mennai said, "You are a frozen sunbeam."

"Not that exactly!" she replied, "though many of those radiant things are frozen in me. But if you would know me more thoroughly, you must go home with me!"

"Where is your home, then?" said La Mennai.

"Come with me up the mountain, and I will show you one of them — the one you can see best."

"I would rather wait for morning," the simple sage replied.

"So you can, if you like; but I must not wait here for you. This hot room will be the death of me if I do. I will dance on the lattice or over the snow crust all night, right merrily, and when you have slept we will set out together."

La Mennai saw that Petite grew more thin and shadowy even as he gazed upon her, that her frame wasted, and that tears coursed down over her shining armor, as he pressed too near her with his lamp, and so he drew back; when, veiling herself in a little cloud or curl of vapor, she receded to the lattice, and launching on the storm, she was soon away. But La Mennai did not sleep well that night, and the little spurs or skates of Petite, dancing over his lattice, oft mingled with his dreams.

The earliest dawn had hardly sent its first sentinel arrow to the mountain's top ere the sprite was clicking again at the lattice; and La Mennai, wrapping his fur mantle about him, was fain to follow her.

The night shadows were still black in the low lands and ravines, as La Mennai set forth with his guide; but the diamond brightness of her wand, the glisten of her whole form, was like a beacon star before his eyes. The cold winds whistled and the glaciers crackled as they passed

on; but their steps did not falter. Petite was now *at home*, and her glee was reassurance to La Mennai. When his feet ached with cold or his hands were numb, it needed only a touch of the ice spirit's wand to set him in that glow so often the successor of a frosty stroke. It must have been that same wand that struck the tracks in which his feet so safely traced their way, for not an accident befell them in the whole ascent. The sun had arisen, and his fiercest smile was on the icy peak before them, when Petite told him their morning's walk was ended. After a moment's leisure breathing, he stopped to gaze about and below him, and blessed the fairy care that had provided for him this feast of polar beauty. Like the heart glow of earth, penetrating through the layers of her crusty bosom, was the morning sun, sending upwards his strong glow through the cloud strata of the sky above him.

A roseate fog, lining the horizon, was first surmounted by the king of day; and then he reached his golden arm into the floating mass of orient cloud above. 'Twas like a strong swimmer amid the flues and ice flotillas of a northern sea — those cloudlets of the rose and crimson hue; those banners of the deepest purple, and castled heights of mist; but aloft, and over them the monarch swung his chariot wheel, into the upper pave of gold beyond, while his own light grew of an intenser whiteness.

Once, as La Mennai turned from this to rest his dazzled sight, he saw, afar, upon a distant Brocken peak, a gigantic shadow, looming high against the mists beyond him. As he paid involuntary homage to the mountain spectre, his own courtesies were answered by the shadowy being. Again he bowed, and again his homage was returned by the spectre. He walked backward, and the figure receded from his place. He passed aside, and the giant sidled to another cliff. He stretched forth his arms, and the answering embrace was offered him. He pointed to the zenith, and the spectre raised solemnly his arms of mist to the dark clouds above him. He leaped around, and the graceful echoes of his movement were on the Brocken height.

Then he stood still in his astonishment, while Petite laughed heartily.

"Who is that being?" asked La Mennai.

"O, that," said she, with mock gravity, "is my son John; but he has played antics enough for once; so you need see no more of him." She waved her wand, and the mists rolled backward, with the Spectre Brocken enfolded in their depths.

"Shall we rest here long?" asked La Mennai.

"No; that is, if you have seen enough of an exceeding high mountain, and of the glory of it. We will return now; for by and by you will wish for other dinner than a melted snowball."

So she struck her magic spear into the unsoftened ice, and made a descending path for the philosopher. But, in going back, the glories of the mountains far exceeded any thing he had seen through the dim dawning. The glaciers were robed in diamond glory, and spectrums of rainbow light were flitting over all the snow's crust. The crisp path was paved with diamond germs, and all the icicles were filled with brightness. Crystal lakes were smiling gloriously within their beds of crystalline, and every ice peak waved a banner of flowing radiance. Here and there a shadow fell in its misty beauty into some safe fastness, and lay in quiet tranquillity amid the effulgence.

But as they yet passed downward, the scenery somewhat changed. The ice sprite's pets, those dancing prism hues, became less frequent and brilliant, and were succeeded by other transient favorites. Soft snow flakes came singly or in loving clusters adown the air, and nestled in the sharp glaciers, or wreathed them with wondrous garlands of arctic beauty. With no labor sound to break the stillness, they threw up their mystic barricades, or flung their floral shroud above the glistening crystals, and La Mennai in vain attempted to retain the tiny creatures in his grasp. At his rude touch they dissolved in tears, and they vanished as he mourned them: but the

sprite admitted no delay; so they passed from under the snow cloud. "This is my 'Giant's Causeway,'" said Petite, as they came to crystal pillars of myriad joints that had sprung from the soil at the touch of Petite's wand; "see its efflorescent tops!" The sun grew high and warm, and Petite seemed to have lost her hurry, as he shone above the Brocken.

Sometimes she found a little pool of melted snow within a mountain ice cup; and using her spear or wand for oar, she dashed into its cool bath, and showered the diamond spray over La Mennai. Sometimes the dripping of a tiny glacier formed a rill or a lakelet, where, on the remnant of a snow crust, she launched and sculled her transparent raft about its surface. Sometimes she slid adown the steepest ices, and anon she vanished beneath the radiant canopy of a sparkling brooklet. Sometimes she turned aside into the blue cave of a wind-hollowed snow-swirl, and anon she was lost amid the green lighted grottoes of a riven glacier. La Mennai's human eyes could but half discern the resplendent beauties of spangles, spars, stalactites, and every form of radiant icicles, stars, and the varied spiculæ in which she revelled; but he did see the more gross and prominent beauties of her favorite retreats, her shining castles, mimic fountains, snow-flowered gardens, her crystal arches,

and transparent lakelets. He began to fear he would be quite left behind, when he saw her take a barge, like the frost from off a flower cup, and with a misty pennon starred with snow suns, launch into a rill, that soon became a torrent. She skilfully avoided the weed booms and mossy dams in her way. But his feet still kept the wand-broken path of yestereve: the sun was pleasant above him; the streams, and lochs, and cascades were rapidly growing more broad and musical; the cold blue lights of the snow hollows receded farther in; the freaks of Petite over diamond bridges and through jewelled paths and caverns became less wonderful, and the rainbow spectrums more seldom in their path; the brown ridges reappeared among the glacial snows, and the soft mists of the low lands curled lovingly towards them.

When Petite left him near the mountain's foot, she said pointedly — for her look was like an ice needle — to La Mennai, "Now do you know me? — though the most wondrous half of myself I have not yet disclosed."

"I think I do," the sage replied. "I believe that in your mountain fastness I have studied you aright. There you are petrified to a tangible, salient form. But the mother of the Spectre Brocken is also the same little being who patters in the hail storm at my lattice

window, and who drops softly through the trees in the warmer rains. She is in the ocean spray and the valley's fog; the clouds are her triumphal flags, and the twilight mists her robes and banners. She is the mother of the streams, and the fountain's source is in her heart. The cold snows are her hidden kindnesses, and the firm glaciers are her earth-needed storehouses. She is changeful in her beauty, but her nature is consistent to those who understand its variable moods. Petite herself, she is Magnus in her offspring, of whom the hermit spectre is least, even in his wild home, the Brocken."

La Mennai bowed his head towards the setting sun, and entered his retreat.

"And was that a school composition?" asked Sophy of her aunt.

"I was once requested to write an article upon hail, snow, dew, rain, fog, &c., describing their resemblances and differences, the manner in which each was formed from the atmospheric moisture, and the phases in which they appeared on the earth. It was this, and a suggestion from some writer I had read, that, with all the other elves, the ice fairies ought not to be forgotten, that influenced my poor fancy, and

suggested this sketch. I hope it has been satisfactory."

"Yes, yes; but why not give us the 'Beggar's Curse' also? It is yet early, and we are not sleepy," said Fred and Sophy.

"Early, and yet not sleepy!" exclaimed Ben; "what complimentary auditors you have, aunt Mary!"

"Your transposition has not improved the compliment," said uncle Charles; "but, Mary, let us have the other. I have my private opinion that it will prove the best."

"The best it may be, and yet not the most interesting or original; the *goodest*, as Ellen used to express it in those years she hears so often referred to now, but not the most new or fanciful." *

* Aunt Mary's second story is necessarily omitted in this printed record of their evening's entertainment.

Evening Ninth.

This was their mother's evening, and these children seemed to feel, as other children often do, that their mother could do better than any body else, and expressed something very like this conviction.

"No, I have no fancy," said their mother; "but if I must expose my lack of it, let that confession content you, with some simple relation that shall prove it."

She looked around upon the group, and with the view of that full throng there came, as often comes to the mother's sight, the vision of one who was not there — Little Willie, who laid his golden locks upon her breast before the oldest of this circle was born to her. And Willie must be brought into the fireside circle this once; he should create an interest for at least one winter evening.

"Shall I tell you," asked the mother, "of Willie's Star?"

"Yes, any thing of Willie, dear little Willie," said Ellen, who could not realize that if he had lived he would have been taller than Fred or Evaleen. So she began her reminiscence of

WILLIE'S STAR.

THERE was a bright star that caught Willie's eye, when he was nursing on my knee, at the large window; for it shone just where the two high tops of oak and elm branch widest from each other. There he saw it looking down with its bright eye, and sometimes he said he could see the whole of a shining face in it. And when the night was darkest, when even the moon was absent from the sky, Willie saw his star, and said it shone most brightly. I did not care to weaken his childish faith; so I let him tell me of the star, of its soarings, of its twinklings, of its loving glances; and he never dreamed that I saw it not, save in the far blue depths of my baby's eyes.

It was such sweet, innocent pastime, that I loved to see him clap his hands and shake his ringlets at his star. And when he grew older, he learned to fly his kite, and would send it aloft on the breeze, with kisses laden for his star. His little banner, too, with its striped bunting, was more dear because of the white stars on its blue fold. He loved to feed the birds that came down from the oak and elm, and to hear their

songs, for often he said he looked when they were wavering about his star.

It was this heavenly fancy of his that made me look upon my jewel as only loaned me for a little time, and then to be taken up and set in the bright crown which the Father loveth to wear.

Then, again, there were times when he seemed so glad, so playful, with such a peach bloom on his cheek, that I thought this gem might be given to irradiate our home for many years, and then to take its place in the great galaxy of Christian heroes who devote their lives to the extension of the cross.

But this was not to be; and I knew it when the eyes became more starry, and the peach glow of a deeper hue. We took our Willie to a southern clime, where the moss hangs in long silken fringes from the old trees, where the acacia grows, and the magnolia blooms. And there, too, where the white, fragrant blossoms are so thick and large, my boy saw his own sweet, silver star, shining its old welcome. He was very playful, and all were very tender of him; and, at first, the novel sights were most reviving, but in time this passed away, and we brought him back to this old home. And all the way his star dimpled in the waters, or sparkled in the vessel's wake, or flew around upon the spray, hiding its light, he thought, in his own showered

curls And when he was at home again, there, too, from between the boughs of the oak and elm, was shining, with its wonted light, his dear, old star.

When our little Lottie came to us, his joy was almost too great for his strength; and I know not how he would have vented it but for his star. He said it shone now with a double light, and that there was a little pale star growing out of the blue mists behind it. So the star was much company during those long, lonesome days, when all were so busy with the lesser light. But our little girl grew very strong and heavy; in due time she could run about and pluck the flowers, and I was blessed with more leisure to devote to Willie. He had now grown very weak, and his large crystal orbs were full of the sweet light he had drawn in from heaven. He would lie for hours, in my arms, with lifted lids and earnest gaze, fixed upon that one point in the heavens; and, one night, he asked, calmly, "Dear mother, may I go to the star?"

It was the first time he had ever spoken of departure. "Willie! my Willie!" said I. "It will never come to me," he said; "I have stretched out my hands to it so often; but, mother, it will never come. May I not go to the star?"

"Certainly, my child!" He smiled very

pleasantly, and soon he was rapt in silence and his star.

I placed his little crib so that it looked up to the old treetops; and though I had many duties besides my other child, yet Willie never felt neglected if he could only gaze upon his star.

One eve, when I had put my dark-haired little rogue to rest, I took him from his crib, and felt that he had grown more frail and trembling since last I held him to my heart. I raised his head and pillowed it against my breast; but he seemed too drowsy to look up or speak to me. I could not bear to see him thus.

"Willie! darling!" said I. He smiled faintly. "Willie, look up! Your star is peeping through the elm-tree boughs!" There *was* a star just beaming among the high branches.

He opened his eyes. Yes, it was there! How radiant he looked! and the little wasted hands were raised, but again fell clasped upon his breast. But he murmured prettily a little rhyme I had taught him, commencing thus: —

"May I love you, little star,
Shining through the blue afar?
May I try, like you, to shine?
May such brightness e'er be mine?
Little star, when hence I go,
In the heaven too, may I glow?"

But half the words were lost in whispers. I

held him closely, softly to me, that my strong heart-beats might lend force for his. A dream was stealing over him; the light seemed fading from his eyes; and then, suddenly, like a reviving flame, it lighted all his countenance. "Mother!" said he, earnestly, "may I now go to the star?"

"Yes, Willie. Go in peace! God bless you." I kissed him as his head fell back again, and the star had sunk below the trees. When he went out of that light slumber, it was to a world where they wake evermore, and I saw that then the star had set.

You all know where we buried him; of the little headstone with its sculptured star; and how I love at eventide to stand beside his grave; for never have I taken my watch there but some bright star has bent its rays on me — rays of the same sweet brightness that oft had shone from Willie's eyes.

There was silence for a few moments as their mother closed her narrative of little Willie; and their father still sat, with his face shaded by his hand, when the old drawing of little Willie was brought forth from the mother's portfolio.

There were no comments made upon either

the picture or the story; but the subdued expression with which they gazed upon the drawing proved how successful their mother had been in awakening an interest for her departed boy.

"Willie has reminded me of 'Isobel's Child,'" said aunt Mary; and she arose to bring Mrs. Browning's "Poems" from her trunk.

She found and read to them the poem which their mother had never known of before.

"I did not resist so long as Isobel," she added, "nor did I allow myself to grieve inordinately when he was gone. I remembered the German story of the dead child, whose shroud was drenched with his mother's tears, so that he could not sleep in his little grave. I thought, too, of Willie more as another star in heaven than as food for the worms of earth.

But when she looked around upon the group, and saw that the younger ones, from being serious, were almost sad, she thought she should tell something more to cheer them.

The clock was pointing to an earlier hour than they usually separated; and while the portrait of Willie was passing from hand to hand, she sat recalling other memories, with which she might while away another hour.

And the other memories came to her; she remembered of a pretty dream she once had enjoyed, but which she knew she could not

reproduce, in all its sleepful beauty, for her children and their cousins.

Ben was the first to recover his wonted spirits. He teased Eva, and tangled Lottie's worsteds; he pulled a hair from Freddy's head, and twisted his fist in Ellen's curls; he slipped apple parings in Katie's pocket, and threw a skein of silk, his aunt had deputed him to hold, over Sophy's neck for a bridle.

Then he begged Eva for a story, saying it was due them all, as Pocahontas was not original. But their mother cut short all dispute by the narration of her dream of THE BLUE FAIRIES.*

* This story, like the one in the former chapter, is necessarily omitted.

Evening Tenth.

"Papa's turn! papa's turn to-night!"

"Yes, we are all ready to hear a story!"

Such was the greeting their father received, as he entered the parlor, where he found ready his chair and slippers.

"How can it have been that we were blessed with such fanciful children?" exclaimed their father. "Your mother pleads off from a frolicsome fancy, and I am sure that a hard-headed old gentleman like myself may be excused from frolicking with any thing more ethereal than these very substantial pets of mine;" and he stroked the curly heads around his chair.

"But are you not a politician, papa?" asked Ellen, with a *naïveté* that caused great explosions of laughter from the boys; and even her mother smiled.

"And what has that to do with *telling stories*, my little girl?"

Ellen did not know. She only had a confused notion that a politician made speeches; that her father sometimes exercised his talents in that way; and that what he now disclaimed was the ability to entertain an audience, even a very

partial one, like the group now gathered about him.

"Does it not make speeches?" she replied.

"Yes, my love; and as I have a tongue, I suppose you expect me to use it for your entertainment. So we can have a talk, as the Indians call it; and it may, as Burns expresses it, 'perhaps turn out a sang, perhaps turn out a sermon.' If I have a right to wonder at my children's ability 'to point a moral or adorn a tale,' I have no right to be surprised at their good listening qualities; for, should your mother disclaim all native talent in such way, I am willing to claim the entire transmission of this ability myself. There were many witch and ghost stories rife when I was a boy; and though my parents disapproved our listening to them, it was because there was then a fear that our credulity might overcome reason. The witch stories were mostly too spiteful and gross to take pleasant hold upon the imagination. I remember but few of them, and but one that I will now repeat. The ghost legends lay farther back upon the groundwork of the ideal, and were more creditable to the fancy and to the heart.

"The witch stories embodied some of the worst, the ghost legends some of the better, elements in our natures."

"Please tell us how it was, papa," said Ellen.

"Yes, let us know enough of the difference to judge why good or bad ourselves," said Ben.

"A witch story was usually a gross, unfeeling charge against some poor, helpless creature; almost always a woman, who lived in her lone hut by the hillside, or in the edge of the wood, whose friends were dead, or children gone; whom want and care had shapened to an ugly mould; whose only pets were the half-wild cats, that ate our singing birds for each day's meals, and scratched, like mad ones, through the forests at a stranger's steps; and whose manners ignorance and solitude had made uncouth and strange. Doubtless insanity was often mistaken for *diablerie*, and a wart or mole was a sure sign that the unfortunate possessor had cherished imps for nurslings.

"When butter would not come, it was supposed bewitched; and then a teakettle of hot water, or some glowing steel, was thrown in to scald or burn the intruder away. Sometimes it had tne desired effect, and the disinthralled cream coagulated in obedience to the churn dash — a result which should have taught them useful facts in chemistry, instead of riveting suspicions upon the helpless. But at these times there were watchful, prying eyes in every out-of-the-way hut or house; and never a search for her but some old

woman was found sick abed after such an experiment, or limping about with bandaged hand or foot. This, of course, proved a foregone conclusion, and made assurance doubly sure. There was some variation in the narratives. Occasionally an old lady would hobble out to make her neighborly calls; and marvels would be related of the tables leaping as her old bonnet was laid down upon it; and of all the plates and bowls upon the dressers shaking in their fear, or in dread welcome, as her hand lay casually upon the shelf — which wonders, if they had the least foundation, are to be placed in the same category with our table jumpings and spirit rappings; mysteries whose source is away in the very heart fountains of nature; fit subjects for the calm psychologist and patient speculator, but not to be explained, in any degree, until a long investigation, a patient search through all the fields on the night side of our being, have brought to light the real facts, and their true relations to each other — those facts which have so mystified and misled many of the most subtle intellects of all days, of other times. But Katie and Ellen look sleepy!"

"No! no! do tell on about the ghosts now, if you please. And we were not sleepy, only still, and a very little afraid; for the old witches were sometimes killed!" said Ellen, with a sigh.

"The ghosts, I said, were more creditable to their delineators. They were more shadowy and interesting; appealed more to the sensibilities, and were often workers of a just retribution. Their mission was to avenge the robbed or murdered, or those who were wronged in any way. They came back from the grave, permitted to wake from that sleep to bring justice upon the evil doer, and sometimes comfort to the mourner.

"These superstitions are much more innocent than the many more universal, so oft reduced to axioms, founded upon some old delusion of which none can now trace the origin; as, that Friday is an unlucky day; that a horse's shoe will keep off witches; that a cat or a dead body brings evil on a ship."

"Poor pussy!" said Katie; "is she generally mistrusted?"

"I had a friend once, who told me that it was with the utmost difficulty he could man his ship, because some ladies had been launched in her — an objection that he had a very gallant desire to do away. He was equally troubled to find sailors for a vessel in which a cat had been a favorite. One anecdote of them (the cats, of course) was this: In a foreign port, some nice little pussy had found her way on board a ship, had liked her quarters, and all unknown to the master or crew

without booking her name or paying her fare, had taken passage for America.

"Perhaps poor pussy thought this a country in which cats were free, even to try the ocean wave; but if so, she was sadly mistaken, as many other poor wretches complain that they have been. As soon as she was discovered, there was a great uproar about her. The sailors felt that she brought bad luck; that her presence portended terrible evil; and they had not even the privilege of casting this feline Jonah into the sea, for to kill the cat was as portentous as to keep her. So, with these two unpleasant horns to the dilemma, and no knowing which was best to hang her on, the situation of Mrs. Pussy and all her companions was very unenviable. Yet, withal, she was a nice little personage. There never was a change of weather but pussy could foretell it; often in the night, entering her master's cabin, laying her soft paw upon his face, thus gently awaking him; and when he would arise and go on deck, he always found that it was well that he had done so.

"Even this protecting watch did not soften the prejudice of the mariners, and the complaints were still perpetual. Finally, the cat disappeared. Her soft paw was no more laid to her master's cheek if storm clouds were arising; and she was seen never again. The distress of the sailors was

not abated. Her dead body lying between decks, or somewhere invisible about them, boded no good, naturally or supernaturally.

"One of the crew acknowledged to the captain that he had killed the cat, hoping her absence would allay the fears of the sailors, and had resolved not to inform them until they had arrived in port. Then the secret was divulged, and the men were assured that neither the cat's presence nor her cruel murder had prevented them a pleasant and unusually successful voyage."

"But *was* pussy a witch?" asked Ellen; "or how did she foretell the storm?"

"As many other animals do, my child — by her strong, pure instincts. Cats, and, for aught we know, all the feline tribe, have a great deal of electricity in them. This is ascertained by very easy and common experiments. With this, or of this, is the glare, even in the dark, of their eyes, and their great vital power, upon which is based the superstition of their nine lives, and the fact of their great endurance of cold, fatigue, pain, wounds, starvation, and all those ills poor pussyhood is heir to. But have I not talked enough?"

"Yes; no; talked enough, but not *told* enough. If you please, just tell us one story: a little short one would be better than none," replied Katie.

"A ghost story, if you will," suggested Fred. "You said those were better than the witch narrations, though we would find no fault with either, or presume to be choosers."

"Well, then, here is one ghost story for to-night."

THE SPECTRE HOUSEWIFE.

THERE was an old house in my native town which, like all human structures, had once been new, but not, like most others of its kind, had grown old in usefulness, but it had been deserted in its first bright shingled and painted glory. It was *a haunted house*, and none ventured to disturb the troubled spirits who had taken up their abode within its walls. The moss gathered on the roof and the sand on the sills, the rust upon the latch and cobwebs on the walls; the grass grew high in the path, and the fruit rotted beneath the overhanging trees. A haunted house, 'twas said; so the boys only snowballed it at a distance, and exiled, anathematized cats sought a safe asylum amid its loneliness. No wonder sounds were heard by the passers by, or that the winds should wail and storms clatter, with such very able (or disabled) mediums to assist them in their manifestations; but it was told that there were not only sounds, but sights. The lone house was not deserted. There was an occupant, a keeper, and her I will call *the spectre housewife*.

I never heard it, but others said they did — the

whir of her spinning wheel and the rocking of her cradle; for the spectre woman had a spectre child; and both had been seen, not only in the late twilight, but also by the bright moonbeams, and even more frequently by the broad day's sun. Sometimes it was a shadowy form, flitting by the window, sometimes resting a few moments in the doorway, with her child pressed to her breast; and there were those who had looked near or long enough to recognize the face and form. She was well known, even previous to the description of a traveller, who, late upon a stormy night, had sought admission at her door, whose wants had been kindly ministered unto, and who, after lodging and refreshment, for which payment had been tendered and refused, had passed with the morning on his way, to learn with astonishment that she, who had been so kind and courteous to him, so helpful to his bodily necessities, was only a spectre housewife.

But she, when a living woman, or earlier still, when a child, had been taken into the family of a good housekeeper, partly as servant, partly as child. She grew up, a pleasant, useful member of the family, and in time was the affianced of her mistress's son.

The marriage was deferred, that some labors or speculations might be terminated; and these

proving successful, a still longer delay was resolved upon, that a beautiful new house might be erected. Perhaps delay, perhaps grief, perhaps a warrantable anxiety, preyed upon the poor girl's mind; but to her appeals to her lover that their union might at length be consummated, there was ever the light, merry answer, that she need not fear, she *should be mistress of the new house.* The work went bravely on, the building was completed, and the marriage was still delayed.

Finally, the poor girl disappeared, no one ever knew how, or when, or where. She was gone. Some answer was given to the usual questions about her; and in time all might have been forgotten, but for the marriage with another of the betrothed master, succeeded by his removal into his new house. But he could not live there. This wife could not be mistress there; another had been promised that. They also disappeared, and went, if not into a far country, yet into a far part of a wide country, leaving untenanted their suspected house. No one else sought the place. It remained unsold, a monument to an evil conscience, if not the domicile of a spectre housewife.

"And was that true, papa?"

"I tell the tale as it was told to me. It was believed to be true, but there were many interesting incidentals that I do not remember. Had I thought to have repeated the story thus, I should have taken particular note of all its minutiæ. You have but the bare outline, and can now guess, or you are no Yankees, what a ghost story was in my young days."

"Were they always short?" asked Katie, half pouting.

"No; a vivid fancy could see there enough to keep it in operation all day and all night."

"But you will tell us another, this was so brief."

"Yes; you will certainly oblige us with a witch story."

"Why, let me see if I can think of one. You must remember the private opinion I have already expressed of the witches."

"You will assist us to form ours."

"Certainly; well, here is another country tale. It is of the widow of my father's old friend, General Camden.

WARDROBE WITCHES.

Madam Camden lived quietly in a large house, fronted by a long lawn that was thickly overgrown with young trees, and ornamented, or rather engrandized, by a few tall and noble old forest denizens, who overlooked, like a pedagogue his pupils, the straggling advances, in an upward direction, of the little spruces and pines who were one day to take their places on the outlook of Camden Place. The long road from the green gate, through the wooded lawn, to the door of the building, was now so seldom used, that stripes of green, like narrow ribbon streaks, alternated with the brown cart ruts and the horses' path.

But Madam Camden did not fear to remain so all "alone in her glory." She did not realize how changed was the world since she was a city belle, with her daily outlay for gloves and shoes, and the suits of pearls and garnets which she wore to evening routs, where invariably her hand was demanded by the general, as the best of partners.

Those ball-room gloves and shoes! Many of them were still lying in old drawers or closets,

wrapped in napkins or bundled in chests, and annually, if not quarterly, inspected, to ascertain what might be the ravages of rats or moths, or to be secured against such depredations. But these were only minor articles amid the multitude of relics, mementoes, memorials, and residues of the once splendid wardrobe of a city belle. There were large closets where dresses hung, of silk that could stand if not walk alone, and velvets that were stiff with embroidery. Muslins fluttered with the lightest breath of an opening door or gasping window, and tissues still smiled with the glistening light of times long gone. Old bonnets had their usual awkward but decisive way of commemorating deceased fashions, and, in silent but impressive language, lectured against the present as well as the past; in fact against all change in head gear. Shawls from Cashmere, France, or Persia, in the same dialect, — words though of example, not of warning, needing no interpreter, — delivered their exordium in favor of immutable laws of dress, citing the well-known edicts, or habits, of the Medes and Persians. Gauze and lace waged a very open, but broken warfare, in the same cause; and an old diamond pin had many brilliant coruscations of wit and reason in his argument for the hard and stable. Not a pearl or garnet contradicted him; and even thick old ribbons stiffly waved applause.

There was good reason why the old wardrobe should hold many private consultations upon these subjects; for the good reason surely was that they had nothing else to do. Madam Camden, with her rheumatic limbs and neuralgic brains, had little, just as little, need of thick furs and mantles as of delicate gauze and laces.

She sat before her chamber fire from morn to night, the new year in and the old year out; sometimes with her screen in her hand, a habit for the preservation of complexion; sometimes with a little easy knitting, of soft worsted or Berlin wool, clicking her ivory needles, and thinking of her sunset satin dress, and the impression it made — with herself in it of course — upon the general. Madam Camden always gave full credit to her dresses for any excitement she had caused; indeed, they seemed in her estimation to have been exclusively influential in such matters, and so to be cherished, venerated, and preserved for the brave things they had accomplished.

But Madam Camden's relatives, and those of her deceased husband, who were to be her heirs according to his will, did not seem to sympathize with her at all in her antique prepossessions and associations.

Their cold, hard common sense, and reasoning of the useful and judicious, were as little palatable

to her. Their gentle hints, and, finally, open insinuations, that her old silks, and velvets, and satins were never to do her any more good, even if it were proper for her to wear any thing but simple mourning, only made the old lady outrageously vexed. Every allusion to her bodily infirmities she understood as a decided hint that it was time for her to take her bed; or as an *aside* to the grim angel to carry her to his own dominions without any delay. This was the more unfortunate, as the young people concerned, though rather poor, were very well disposed, and would have never harbored thoughts like those imputed to them, if the lady herself had not suggested such opinions as the most likely to actuate their conduct.

But what was really horrible, the wardrobe itself became, in time, quite treacherous and false to its old mistress, void of all allegiance; for, one by one, some of the more important and elegant members of it departed. After the first discovery, they became less quiet in their mode of departure; and the servants felt no doubt but witches had obtained admission to these loneliest haunts of the old domicile. Such rustling of silks and dangling of ribbons, such fluttering of gauze and muffled tramps of velvet, such rattling of necklaces and clicking of *bijouterie* it was awful to hear.

Two maids left the house in consequence of the fearful disturbances; and the only one who constantly remained was one remembered in the widow's will, and who was to have a great interest in the remains of her personal property. She was as much at a loss as Madam to account for the marvellous noises and disappearances. The house was fastened every night, and Hero, the great dog, kept watch before the door.

No one ever saw the moving of a light through the forbidden rooms; and mortal footsteps had never been detected among the sounds which usually awoke them after the midnight hour.

It was "midsummer eve,"—so the old lady herself informed me,—and very late ere she retired. A volume of Spenser's "Fairy Queen" had been brought from the library and opened before her, but the dim eyes only sought here and there a passage, to receive it as a prompter for the recalling of scenes she once had liked. But now every thing connected with the supernatural had to her a new and strange interest. Were there, thought she, a race of beings so different from us in some respects? so superior, it might be, at all events independent of us? And were their powers vivified, if not increased, when dealing retribution upon the wrong doer? And was she a wicked one? Was it wrong for her to hoard the cast-off clothes, no longer suitable, if wearable?

Was it injustice to deprive others, who might enjoy it, of that pleasure? Had they a right to complain because she did what she would with her own? Were all the favored ones of earth but stewards of their great possessions, and were all the short comers, the needy, and the scantily supplied, in strict right the owners of that which could be of service to them, and now was of no use to its possessors? Such were the reflections of Madam, and long was her reverie. At a late hour she retired to rest, and long after the bright moon had arisen was it ere she sunk into the heavy, fitful slumber of the aged.

She was aroused by the same hurryscurry that so often had alarmed her. The door was open into her nurse's chamber. "Betsey," she said, "we must look into this. Come with me; there is a good moon, that will light us any where. Come quick. I will follow, or you may lead; just which you please."

Betsey was not particularly delighted with the "right of way" thus allowed her, but said nothing. A light was struck, while Madam was getting out of bed; and in their long night dresses the two women crossed the upper hall, and entered the large room, once a great chamber, but now principally used as a depository of "ole clo';" in fine, Madam's wardrobe, and now the haunt of the witches. The curtains were thrown

back, to aid the half-lighted lamp, and the play of varied lights and shadows rendered still more confused the scene of disorder within. The winds, too, which rushed through the newly-opened doors, endowed with a fearful, lifelike motion the drapery of house, windows, and couch.

Some of Madam's nicest gowns were frolicking on the bed, flirting their long trails, and threshing about their limp arms; some were capering about the room in all manner of fantastic gyrations; some were hiding in the denser shadows, and some were glimmering by the bright windows. A long velvet bodice and habit came up to her without any head, and let drop a profusion of old-fashioned courtesies; a satin body with embroidered train was sweeping it across the carpet in a stately minuet; an India print was sidling down by the wainscot, with a long fan for partner in a contra dance; a lace scarf and veil kept step together, for a few moments, in a fancy hornpipe. The gold chain and bracelets beat time for the company; and Madam saw plainly that her well-kept wardrobe was likely to prove light footed, if not light fingered. Several dresses, overtopped by quaint old bonnets and shadowed by rich long veils, had already glided past her, and were tripping down the stairs, followed by trailing shawls and immense mantillas; while odd, if not eccentric, shoes stepped briskly about in every direction.

There was a long cloak, trimmed with fur, turned inside out, and stalking quietly over the floor. A big muff, with a tippet dangling for a train, followed after; and a dressing case went cobump, cobump, to the very foot of the staircase.

"Avaunt, witches, fiends, and demons," said Madam, in an heroic strain that was worthy of Joan of Arc or Mrs. Caudle; and she flourished a Bible over her head just caught from the light-stand. "Begone! In the name of the Holy One, depart."

There was a sudden stillness, then the soft gliding of truant dresses back to their places; and, as the light she bore waxed brighter, Betsey replaced the curtains, peeped under beds and behind boxes, but could find no tangible witch or wizard. Their power was manifest, but no salient point presented itself to their vengeance or their clemency.

Madam retired to bed again, but too weary and excited to sleep; and insisted the next day, in her comparison of notes with Betsey, that the uncouth noises did not quite cease until dawn.

Now, since it was clear that the wardrobe was bewitched, there was no more pleasure in contemplating it; and enjoining secrecy upon Betsey, that the value of her gifts might not be depre-

ciated, she sent for her nieces and other juvenile relatives, and after giving them a fine supper, called them to her guest chamber, most brilliantly lighted up, while every absentee for once was in its right place, and then and there she distributed among them the rich treasures they knew she had so highly valued. Their delight was natural and extreme; and honest Betsey, it is related, sympathized heartily with them in their abundant possessions; indeed, from that time, she seemed as much a favorite with the whole clique of them as Madam herself, though she, compared with her former self, was now a jewel in their memories.

It was natural that Madam should love to expatiate to Betsey upon her self-sacrifice and generosity, though the good nurse privately declared that, for her mistress, one good double flannel dressing gown was worth more than all the dresses that had ever attracted to their lonely mansion the Wardrobe Witches.

While the story was going on, aunt Mary had sat quietly drawing the witches on the back of a note envelope, and when it was done they crowded around her to get a glimpse of it.

Ben, Phil, and all the great critics, were vastly

pleased, and declared it must be finished off for their book that was to be.

"I did not know that any but the Alexandrian library had been determined upon," said their aunt.

"Yes, a regular fire-proof, glass-cased *papier maché*, ornamented library, filled with muslin-covered, steam-printed books!" Such was the library they had in view; of which their twelve night stories were to make a part.

While this discussion was closing, Katie was privately whispering her conclusion to Ellen, that the elder people's stories were no better than Fred's and Sophy's. But this opinion was too heretical to receive the entire concurrence of the little blue-eyed one.

"Papa's are *gooder*," said she, laughing.

"But what explanation are we to have of the Wardrobe Witches?" asked Phil.

"Your aunt Mary's," rejoined their father.

"That the wardrobe truly was bewitched?"

"What else would you like?"

"I supposed that it was to appear that the young people alluded to had been playing their tricks upon the old lady."

"Which, undoubtedly, would seem very natural to you!"

"Why, not at all supernatural."

"But I was talking of witches!"

"Just what you often do, if you do not really try for it. Have not we been accused of bewitching the clock, and the lamp, and the door knob; and spiriting away the almanac, and the newspaper, and the paper folder, and doing a thousand such mischievous tricks, ever since we came home for the holidays?"

Such was the discussion between Phil and their father; but Ellen was detected in a yawn, and the little ones were forthwith marched off to bed.

Evening Eleventh.

Charlotte was ready with her Hibernian revelation; but when she entered with her carefully-written tale, she was surprised to see some sad looks, and hear some sad tones, from the juveniles, who were huddled in one corner.

"What is the matter to-night?"

"O, we were thinking how sorry we are that the stories are almost over. To-morrow will be the last."

"And to-night we have, of course, the last but one. But, children, do not make a fuss about it. Perhaps we shall find it quite a relief to be well through them all; and may feel that there is nothing to be regretted in the finale of the series," said Ben, patronizingly.

"Well, I am sorry, for I know Lottie has a pretty story and a pretty picture, too," said Ellen, quite in earnest.

"Yes, you may regret, for you do not have them to write," said Fred.

"But if you express too much grief, may be Lottie will not add to your afflictions by reading her Milesian Myth," said Ben.

"I will trust Lottie for that, or any thing else she has promised to do," said Fred again.

"But had we not better call Biddie in?" said Ben again, "that she may see if she is correctly reported."

"And she, too, will trust Lottie," said their mother, "for she asked and obtained my permission to go to her brother's this evening."

"Well, we are ready," said Ben, "for the bogs and bogles. Come to my arms, Nelly dear, that you may not get lost or frightened." Nelly seated herself on her cousin's knee, and Charlotte commenced her tale.

THE FAIRY BOGTROTTER.

Little Kathleen lived with her old grandmother, on the edge of a vast moor or expanse of bog and peat ground. Their cabin was very rude, with only a straw *pailasse*, a few stools, and a high-backed chair for old Nora, as furniture; though a stump of a tree, well hewn out, was a good enough table; and a few shelves held their wooden bowls and trenchers, with the rare delft plates old Nora had owned so many years. There was a smooth stone by the cabin door, where the old woman sat when the sun shone warm; and as she was almost blind, and her hands were lame, she did nothing but sway herself back and forth, wailing the low keene which seemed to be her funeral cry for all life's good and joy.

Nora's daughter, the mother of little Kathleen, lived there too, or rather slept there; for all day long she was at the distant hamlet, crying vegetables in the market, or at work away in the grounds of Castle Shane.

She was often gone before Kathleen arose in the morning, with her basket of pulse and greens, and sometimes did not return until the

old woman and child were in a sound slumber If old Nora moaned over joys that were gone, it was not thus with Honor, her child.

She never complained. There were few words on her tongue; and she took her basket on her head each day, as though it contained all her life portion, and her mind was well made up to bear its heaviest burden.

Kathleen could not remember the days when her mother nursed and took care of her; so she was well content to bide so lonely by herself. There were no neighbors near them, only where Lough Neagh glowed in the distance were there rude shelters, as if scooped from the earth, and roofed with vegetable beauty.

One day little Kathleen wandered far from the cabin, even out of old Nora's call; and she strayed on until she came to the black bog.

There were soft green hillocks, like the houses over the lough, only so wee and still; and Kathy sat upon them, and played with the blue violets she had been gathering.

But when she rose to go away, her foot slipped, and she went between the hillocks into the slimy bog. Kathy floundered about, and began to cry; for she knew that her grandmother could not hear, nor could she help her if she heard her cries; so she screamed all the more, because it was for naught.

While Kathy was in her trouble, she heard a low laugh, like the chirrup of a bird; and looking up, she saw a *fairish* on a reed of one of the hillocks beyond. But little Kathleen did not know what it was, for neither Honor nor Nora had ever told her of *the good people*. The fairish was dressed in a very short frock of yellowish green, woven of texture like the thistle's down, or bird of paradise's trail, so that its gloss was more like fur, or fine plumage, than silk; and with her rushen helmet, her buttons of peacock's feathers' eyes, her birchen buskins, and her wand of petrified willow, she had quite the aspect of a little huntress. Her twinkling eyes were black, like those of a mouse; her hair was long and fine, with a reddish tinge, like that of sunset light, in its deep flaxen hue; and her face, her hands, arms, and feet were of the clear purplish pink that settles beneath the nails when hands are cold or death is calling.

So, with that strange mixture in her looks of the real and the unreal, of sparkling life and the faint tinge of death, it is no marvel that Kathleen was bewildered, as even her mother or grandmother might have been.

But Kathy floundered all the more as the black-eyed fairish gazed upon her; and then, with a leap like a cricket, the fairish was on the bog beside her, when, taking her hand, it lifted

her from the mire, and she was again on the soft green hillock.

Kathy was so glad to be helped out that she gave the fairish her soft violets, some bog berries she had gathered, and a few smooth petrifactions she had picked up on her way; but the little green woman said, "No, I will not have them; only promise me that you will come to-morrow, and that no one shall know you have seen me."

Kathleen promised, and was soon on her way home, with all her new-found treasures. The fairish helped her through the bog, and left her in the gloaming. But she did not fear now. She tripped lightly along; and when she reached the cabin, old Nora had gone to bed, and left only a little supper for Kathy. She took the crust and lay down also on the straw; and then she thought of the green lady of the bog; of her bright eyes and plumaged dress; of her plump little hands and feet; of the long hair that was not bound beneath a cap; and of the queer little sandals, like glossy bark. She hoped she should find her on the morrow, and fancied what a fine time they would have jumping over the peat morass, and dancing on the mossy hillocks. Her fancies had dissolved in dreams ere Honor came and lay down beside her two children, the old baby and the little girl.

Next day, Kathy took the potato her mother

gave her, and gnawing it all to the heart, she set out upon her search for the fairish, munching at the half-raw core as she went her way.

She found the fairish waiting by the bog, with her lap full of berries, and some mealy roots, like sweet, boiled radishes. "These are for your breakfast," said she; "I have eaten mine;" and Kathy was glad to get it, for the potato, even with its solid core, was hardly sufficient sustenance. After she had eaten, the fairish said, "We will find a spring;" and soon they had come to a rill of sparkling water. Then Kathleen was refreshed and rested, and all ready for the wildest sport. She could not leap into the tall trees, nor swing from a high bough back to the ground, as the fairish could do, but she could jump, and dance, and gambol, like the lightest little childling who ever tried to keep up fellowship with any one of the good people; and when she was tired or hungry, they were sure to come to a clump of berry bushes, or a jet of water, or a nest of honey; and Kathleen never had seen such lilies as grew in the recesses of the bog, or any flowers like those that were blossoming far away in all this fairish's garden. When the noontide sun was hot, Kathy grew sad and faint, and "the slape was in her eyes," said Biddy, so the fairish invited her on to a dwarf forest, where the trees smelled sweet, like thyme and hawthorn.

They came at last to a bower, or temple, of hewn trees, with living branches left to deck them, and creepers over the open spaces showed like a thick dark lattice. It was very cool here, and would have been gloomy, but that gigantic glow-worms hung their soft astrals from the verdant roof, and filled the bower with a pleasant brightness. A little fountain played its sylvan tune in the centre, and a high hillock beyond it, for their rustic sideboard, was covered with luscious fruits and berries. When Kathleen had eaten, the fairish asked her of her home and history, but she had not much to tell; and the little lancer in green replied, "Then you do not know as much as I do, for I can tell you more than this of yourself."

"Arrah! and who are you?" asked Kathleen, with all simplicity, thinking it but right there should be an exchange of confidence between them.

"O, no matter for my story nor my name," she answered, with a smile; "I am a little bog-trotter, whose home is always in the swamp, and who will never have a better one to live in."

"But this is very nice," said Kathleen.

"You could live in a better one, and I could not — that is one difference between us; and another is, that I could get for you a dozen better ones, but you can do little for me."

"Sure, and can I do any thing for you?" asked Kathleen.

"Yes; you can come and see me every day, and we will play and dance together like birds or crickets in the bogs and bushes."

"I will come every day, to be sure, until I am old enough to go to market with my mother. She is waiting long that I should grow large and strong, to help her with the baskets."

"I will manage it so that you shall never be larger or stronger, and you shall be my little Kathleen, my childling, playfellow, always."

"Arrah! but my mother and the baskets; she is so weary now of feeding me and my old grandmother, for we cannot do any thing for ourselves, and mother is always cross and tired."

"I will find your living for you, that is, if you can live upon such as this day's feast. You shall have berries, fruits, sweet nuts and roots, honey, and aromatic barks and herbs. O, there is enough to live on here, and no trouble of the pot, or cabin smoke."

"Sure, and may I carry some to my grandmother?"

"I will always manage that you shall find some berries, or pheasants' eggs, or tender cresses; but you must never let her know of me, or of the gifts I bring to you."

Kathleen saw no objection to all this; and she

promised the bright-eyed fairish that every day she would come and play with her. So, after this, the two passed the whole of the long summer days in their wild play and merry bogtrottings. Kathleen was very happy, for the fairish was always in good humor with her; and when her mother scolded her, and her grandmother complained, she always made her peace with them through some nice cresses, eggs, or fruits she had brought them from her wanderings. Thus they were pacified, and let her live in the bog; for she came home always so safely, and never forgot their wants and scanty supplies.

Only one thing troubled her now. It was the fear that her grandmother would be sick, or fall from the doorway stone in a fit, or something would be wanted that she might get or do. But when her anxieties were expressed, the little bogtrotter laughed and vaulted into a tree, from whence her bright eyes could see to and into old Nora's cabin; and she promised always to send Kathleen home whenever she might be of service there. The little girl was very well pleased to hear then, and at any other time, that her grandmother was asleep, or crooning some old song; but when she found that she was vexed or sick, she hastened back to the cabin immediately.

One day there came a priest to Honor's house, and he said Kathleen must be baptized and

come to mass constantly. Old Nora seemed very glad, and Honor, as usual, was silent, so, of course, said nothing against it. Thus it was agreed that she should come the following Sunday. Kathleen heard all this, for the fairish sent her home when the shovel hat made its appearance near the cabin; and when, the next morning, she went to play with the little bogtrotter, she told her all of the new plan. Then the fairish seemed very much disturbed, and her face was purple with rage.

"You might have died for all him or them long ago, and been lost, unless I changed you to a fairy," said she, spitefully; "and now they will baptize you, so that I can never see you any more!"

Sure, but I will come after that, and play in the bog every day!" replied Kathleen.

"You may play, if you like, after the baptism, but you cannot play with me! You cannot see me any more!"

Kathy asked if she could not find another playfellow as welcome as herself.

"No! there is no other like you — so merry and confiding. Nor is there, all about, another fatherless child who has never been baptized."

Kathleen cried, and said she would not be baptized, then — she would rather play with the bogtrotter. The fairy was right pleased at this,

and she went to a hillock, from which she drew a necklace of large nuts, whose burnished surfaces were traced with seams, like uncouth cabalistic characters.

"You are very good, little Kathleen," said she, "and have made me oft so merry that I should give you something. Whenever you are in great want or distress, if you crack one of these nuts I shall know it, wherever I am, and will strive to help you." She hung the brown necklace over the child's bosom, and then they were merry again, till the day was passed, and Kathy went home in the gloaming.

When it was Sunday, Honor brought a new printed frock to the child, and a bright handkerchief for her head, and took her to the church, away by the market-place. She showed her the fine altar, and a large picture of the blessed Mother, with her cheek leaned on her baby's head; and Kathy thought it must be very pleasant to be the child of such a mother. There was a nun in long black robes, with a white cloth bound around her brow and neck, who marked her keen, admiring look, and told her that by the holy water of baptism she, too, might become just such a blessed child, and be thus brought into the bosom of that ever-blessed Mother. But when the priest came towards them to baptize her, Kathy was frightened, and

ran away. A nun, who would fain have held her, caught hold of the nut-brown necklace, and it scorched her hands like a glowing chain of fire. She was at last drawn back to the altar; but the priest did not notice her; he only spoke harshly, in the ear of Honor, something which made her weep sullenly. She said nothing to Kathleen on her way back, nor when they arrived at the cabin; but the next morning she told mother Nora what the priest had said to her, and the old woman wailed the loud Keene, as if an unshriven soul had departed.

When Honor had gone to the market, the child wandered to her old playground, and there she saw the fairish, dancing over the bog like a sunbeam on the water. She was very kind, and in most excellent spirits; never was there sweeter honey than they found that day, nor berries of more tempting flavor. But there was something in poor Kathy's heart that told her it was wrong in her to be a baby still, and to do nothing all day long but play with a fairy bogtrotter.

She was troubled, too, at the remembrance of her mother's tears, and the wild Keene of old Nora, because she would not be baptized. Perhaps she had been very bad, and even the fairish at last might fail her. She kept these thoughts to herself, and did not let the wild bog-

trotter know what was in her mind; and thus, all summer long, she played in the meadows with the fairish.

One day old Nora did not get up, and Kathleen staid to watch her. She brought her water, and bathed her head and hands, but the slow fever would not be abated. She was now quite blind, but she drew Kathy to her side, and, feeling of her face, the old withered hand fell upon the nut necklace. "What is this, Kathy?" she asked.

Kathy said the nuts came from the bogs, and she wore them for good luck.

"It is uncannie!" said the old woman; "do not wear it any more." Then she drew her closely to her breast, and said, "You must go to the priest and be baptized, and hear the mass, and be a good girl to your mother, far better than she has been to me."

Kathy promised to be kind, and do what good she could; but it was long ere she would promise to go to the baptism.

That night old Nora died; and the wake that was held over her body frightened Kathy so that she ran away, and was gone when the priest came. But Honor told her she must now go to church with her, and hear the masses for old Nora's soul.

"And will you never be baptized?" sobbed

Honor, "and never say a mass for me, as I will do for my mother. Sure, is it for my sins that you are ever to be a wicked child?"

Kathy cried, and said she would not be wicked; and if her mother would only love her like the holy Mother in the picture, she would do any thing she wanted.

Honor's heart was touched now; she drew ner lone and loving child to her heart, and pressed sweet kisses on her lips.

The next day the child wandered, as had been her wont, from the now lonelier cabin to the bog; but the fairish was in a cloud, and shadows were on all the hillocks. Then she told the little bogtrotter how that Nora was dead and buried, and her mother was beginning to love her, and wished her to be baptized, and that she had promised it to please her.

"And I have come, darlint, to give you back the nut necklace; for my grandmother said, when she was dying, it was uncannie, and I must not wear it."

Then the fairish said, "We will see how uncannie it is! Do you give it up?"

Kathleen threw it over her head to the fairy, as she would have cast aside a yoke of bondage. The little bogtrotter took it up, and laid it on a large stone. She struck it a fierce blow with her wand, and one nut flew open. She drew from

it a jewelled ring, and laid it on the stone. She struck again, and another flew open, from which she drew abundance of shining pearls. Another blow opened a third nut, from which was taken a veil of most delicate lace. From a fourth was drawn a muslin robe, fine as a spider's web. From another the fairy hand drew forth a pair of finest silken hose. In another had been a watch, like a brilliant gem; in yet another, a silken purse with money filled; and in another was found a mirror, in which Kathleen was asked to look. She saw, away down, as in a focus of lights and shadows, a beautiful form, with large, clear, poet eyes, and hair curling around a noble brow, and a small something, like a pen or pencil, in his hand. She could not gaze long enough into the bright reflection, for, while still enjoying it, the fairish snatched it away. "The nuts are not half cracked," said she; "are you willing to trust me for what is in the rest?" But Kathy's mind was quite made up to return the necklace, and be baptized. She said the beautiful robes and gems were not for one like her; and she would rather the drops of baptism were on her brow than any fairy pearls.

The fairish touched the necklace with her wand, and the nuts reclosed again, inclasping their treasures. She laid it over Kathleen's neck, and said, "You will wear it yet a while, for good

luck. You know I cannot harm you with the necklace on your bosom."

"Surely, you will never harm the like of me," Kathy replied to her; "we have played so merrily together, and I have loved you. Only the love of the holy Mother for all who come to her can be better than your love has been to me."

"Then you may seek her love in welcome, and for the future haunt St. Columb's Well for luck and weel," the bogtrotter said, angrily, snatching again the necklace; and, leaping from hillock to hillock, she was soon lost in the gloaming.

After this, Kathleen was baptized, and went to hear the masses said and sung; and she prayed to the holy Mother to love her and make her good, like all her other children.

From this time Honor grew more gentle and motherly; and Kathleen went often with her mother to market and to mass.

One holiday, she wandered to the bog; but the fairy bogtrotter was no more visible, only she thought she heard a spiteful laugh in the thicket, where the bower was wont to be. Kathy did not fear this spite; she was now a child baptized, and could go and kneel upon old Nora's grave, which was better for a young maid than any fairy bower could be.

After this, it was her only pleasure, her sole

recreation, to gaze upon the holy Mother, in the altar picture; and the story says that she grew up to look almost like the artist's sweet Madonna; at least an artist thought so, who came to kneel at the chancel one day, and who thought he never had seen an expression before like that which dwelt in the face of Kathleen, the market girl of Lough Neagh. When her devotions were ended, she looked up and saw the same face bent on her that she had once admired in the bogtrotter's mirror.

There was in both a feeling as though they had known each other, and she was not flustered when the artist came and begged leave to draw her portrait for a great picture he was painting. Kathleen was willing; but ere the picture was done, he threw across its female face a sunny shade of joy; he robed it in a bridal dress of fairy beauty, and looped back the rich tresses with a bandeau of shining pearls.

"Kathy," said he, — and he held towards her a brilliant ring, like that she had seen but once before, — "may I place this in betrothal upon your finger?" And he whispered low, "Will you not be my bride, the dear original of my great life picture?"

"Dear little Kathy," exclaimed Eva, as she took up the drawing.

"And for how much of this are we to return a vote of thanks to Biddie? and for what besides clerkship are we to be grateful to you?" asked Ben.

"For all you like best I will resign the thanks to Biddie. But as I am not obliged to testify against myself, I shall not tell you what was lost, because I could not understand or retain the beautiful pathos which was poured out in a fairy brogue I could not interpret. It was like music in a foreign tongue; we receive its spirit, though we cannot reproduce its words."

"But what did she mean by the 'core of the potato?' Was it a fairy paratie, like an apple, with seeds, or like a plum, with a stone in it?"

"I asked Biddie, and she told me that the poor children, who can have but one potato for a meal, do not have that but half cooked, that it may remain longer as food in their stomachs — that it may sustain them while it is so slowly digesting."

"Poor little children," said Eva; "when they ask for bread, to give them a stone!"

"But what is a fairish?" said Katie.

"O, that is only the Irish term for a fairy."

"And are the fairies the good people?" persisted Ellen.

"Sc the Irish think, or, at least, so they call them."

"And did Biddie say that Honor was cross to Kathy?"

"I cannot repeat the tender way in which she spoke, both of Honor and her child; but she did not represent her as faultless."

"We will never call the little Irish children *paddies*, nor be sorry to have them come here where there is enough for them to eat," said Ellen.

"Without resorting to fairy fodder," said Ben. "Well, Lottie, you got finely through that bog; and now we must bid good night to our dear ittle bogles."

Evening Twelfth.

Phil joined the centre table party, looking very well satisfied with the "welcome" he brought in his pocket; and the older ones, who had read the Waverley novels and Wilson's "Lights and Shadows," and were, of course, very fond of Scotch literature, had formed great expectations.

Ellen and Katie had grown more philosophical, and became of Ben's opinion that it was not best to mar the evenings, as they came, with thoughts that they must pass away, and would never come again.

"We shall have some better ones, as likely as not, and with better stories in them, too," added the hopeful comforter.

"But when?"

"When? O, when we all get together next year. I shall think of something, myself, a great deal better than what I have told you now, and no doubt the others will *improve*."

"I fear that we are past improvement," said their father, with a glance over his shoulder, from the whirligig chair, at his wife.

"Then we will excuse you, sir, and you, madam, and all who are fixed in an unprogres-

sive position. EXCELSIOR is the motto for the juveniles; and those who cannot improve will be very likely to be found in a backslider's position, and to be even so far down that it will take more than a fairy bogtrotter to lift them to light, and to the verdant earth again."

"But have we no room for Aleck?"

"Aleck is shy, and wont come in. He says his shirt sleeves are soiled, and his boots smell of the stables."

"Smell of these tables," said Ben; "and so have we all, for the last fortnight."

"More than of the Alexandrian library, even," said Phil, rapping for silence.

LOCH AND LINN.

Not far from the wild shore, where the waves beat back and forth between Iona and the mainland of auld Scotia, there lived, many years ago, two lairds, who, from being the best of friends, became the best of foes; that is, if there are such things as good haters. The war waged between them descended to their children, and extended to all in their respective clans. They did great mischief to each other; and at times, there was want, like famine, in their castles. Their wives died of dread and watching; and, at last, the children of each fierce laird had passed away before him; all but the youngest of the elder foe, and her mate in the rival castle, who had not been the youngest of her household band.

Like the fabled cats who had eaten all of each other but their tails, these foes had now destroyed much of what was dearest to each other; and last of all, the chieftains died also; one of a never-healed wound, the other of fever brought on by anxiety and chagrin.

These two surviving girls were now under the king's guardianship; and looking upon their

land, perhaps, if not on them, as "treasure trove," he had them taken from their homes and placed in a convent to be educated. But the efforts of the good nuns, and of the lady abbess, to induce them to take the veil, and retire from a world which should be as a mournful sepulchre to each of them, were all in vain. The ladies grew up, strong and fair, not loving each other, but keeping all dislike in good subjection; and each determined to return in good time to her own castle, to manage her cause there as she saw fit. It was a long waiting before permission was received from the king for the two ladies to repossess their fiefs; and many were the reproaches of the good *religieuses* at their vain hankerings for wealth and worldly honor.

Isabel went to her tower on the steepled rock, where the wild torrent, that fell from the highland fastnesses, gave its name to her estate; and she was known as Isabel of the Linn. Margaret retired to her castle by the placid lake, where she, in the same manner, was designated as the Lady of the Loch.

Two ladies, so young, so beautiful, so gay, could not be overlooked; and even to the court were borne their praises, from both Loch and Linn. Both Margaret and Isabel were invited to the palace; but, either they distrusted the good intentions of the king, or were too well

satisfied with their briefly-exercised authority to resign it at once. They sent their excuses, by a true herald, to their sovereign guardian, and expressed great willingness to do all the honors of their poor household, provided the king, or any of his retainers, would come and be their guests.

The king had a young friend, — some said he was a brother, — whom he wished to introduce to the heiresses of his kingdom; and as the two estates of Loch and Linn had not reverted to him, he felt bound to secure them to this Marquis.

So, with streaming pennons and blazing banners, the royal suite went forth, from Holyrood, away through the Highlands, to visit these noble ladies of Loch and Linn.

The Lady Margaret was a clear brunette, with a hazel eye and peach-bloom cheek; her form was round, and finely moulded; her expression vivacious, and her mood usually a merry one. The castle at the loch was flanked by green meadows, well browsed by many kine; and her retainers looked as though they would do all honor to a loved and lovely lady.

The Lady Isabel was of a stately height, like her own strong tower; her eye was blue and clear, like her father's shield; and her skin as fair as the snow that lingered first in the mountain recess of the Linn.

She was a cold, proud lady; but no prouder

of herself than were her hardy mountaineers of their young mistress; and the love she showed to them proved that there were warm places in her heart.

When the king and his young friend the Marquis arrived at these Highlands, they paid their court first to Lady Isabel. This preference gratified her so much that she appeared unusually amiable; and a more gentle hostess, or more gallant guests, it would have been hard to find, in all the island, than gathered at the Linn.

Hunting and hawking were among the chief amusements, at which the Lady Isabel, on her snowy charger, proved her noble blood in all her bearing; and the forrays often made into the domains of Lady Margaret let light into the monarch's brain respecting the causes of many gone-past feuds. His presence now averted all disturbance; but he saw where there must have been much reason for complaint.

"The fault lies all in this," said he to the Marquis; "the Loch and Linn should ever have been one. They should wed together now, as do their waters at our feet. It is a pity that one of those fighting lairds had not left a son. I would have wedded him to the daughter of the other, and would have sent his good sister to the convent, whether she said 'Ay' to my lady abbess, or 'Nay.'"

The Marquis mused a while, and then replied, that it was a pity, as the king's plan would have been so good, that it could not be thus arranged; and then he studied a while, as though he would fain find a better one.

After a dance, that eve, with the stately Isabel, to the sound of merry bagpipes in the old stone hall, he took the king aside, and said that he had already made up his mind which of the ladies to choose; and without seeing Lady Margaret, he would pledge himself to Lady Isabel.

The king disapproved of this so much that he absolutely forbade him. He told him Lady Margaret was richer and more beautiful; her castle by the lake was worth two of that Highland tower at the linn; and that she was equally witty, learned, and graceful.

He told him of the fish in the loch, the game in the forests, and the loaded wains at her Harvest Home. The Marquis, of course, refrained from pledging himself; but he left the Lady Isabel's tower with those subtle signs that ladies know presage a sure return.

If Lady Margaret had been offended that her rival's opportunities had had precedence of her own, the offence was quite concealed, or passed away. She was all smile and bloom, like an orient sky, and the rich plenitude of her castle contrasted strongly with the strict economy of

Lady Isabel. On her slight chestnut barb she led the way around the lake, through ravine and dell, starting the deer and following down the white hare; her boats, upon the waters, glided under purple mountain shadows, to the sound of flutes blending with the dripping oars; and at eve the minstrel touched his harp to its merriest strains, as the Marquis led the dance with their dark-eyed lady. He was so absorbed in pleasure and rapt in admiration, that the king could not refrain from reminding him of a once foolish resolution.

"See," said the monarch, "the lady whom fate has left for you. And, were it not for my gold-haired queen, I would e'en wed her myself, and be mine the placid lake."

But the Marquis seemed not to swerve from his allegiance to the Lady of the Linn, though it must have been that his feelings were deeply interested in Margaret of the Loch; for, though he danced, sailed, sung, rode, walked, and talked with the more rosy beauty, though he seemed never so happy as when at her side, though it was very evident he did not mean to leave a slight impression upon her heart, though it was plain he wooed, it seemed equally certain he never meant to wed.

But he abandoned himself to the pleasure of her society; and because the days were not to

last, he pressed the more of life into them. Lady Margaret must have felt misgivings that, in the end, she was not to outrival the Lady of the Linn. Neither did she doubt the power of her own fresh charms, the attractions of her loch and castle, nor the influence of the king.

She only doubted the power of a noble lord to break his knightly troth; and she feared his pledge was given to Isabel, the Lily of the Linn.

Yet was it not unknightly faith to come to her, to abandon himself so long to her smiles and blandishments, to conceal his troth, to love and make himself beloved of her?

But her proud heart said, "He shall not see he is more to me than any other guest."

The king had returned to his palace at Holyrood, the royal retinue had scattered abroad, the snows of winter had succeeded to the dark rains of autumn, but still the Marquis lingered beside the Lady Margaret, his Highland Rose, as she now was often called, while her pale rival bore the equally sweet title of the Highland Lily.

During all this time, the surmises were many and confused, among the retainers, as to which of the beauties would rivet her love charms on the noble lord. Both loved him — that was not doubted; nor did any one wonder at this who saw the gallant Marquis, and the proud escutcheon that he bore. His suit would be

favored by either, unless he should neglect to press and complete it too long. This seemed now to be the danger; but it was averted by the king, who sent his royal mandate to the knight, bidding him return, and his paternal request to the two ladies, inviting them to a royal fête at Holyrood.

They were there; and Margaret and Isabel for the first time together faced their noble lover. Right princely were his courtesies, both to the Lily and the Rose; and when requested by the king to take his harp for a minstrel favor, he sang the following ballad, with a mild, sweet grace that reached to every heart. But it most deeply penetrated the bosoms of the ladies of the Loch and Linn.

THE HIGHLAND ROSE AND LILY

Auld Earth ha' mony a floweret fair,
An ilka tree its blossom,
Wi' fragrance and wi' beauty rare,
Starred thick upon her bosom.

She lo'es to ho'd the hawthorn up,
Thro' a' the scented mornin;
She lo'es to hide the vi'let's cup
Her bosom sweet adornin.

She flaunts the lilac i' her snood,
Like a proud, weel-plumed ladie·
The vine curls ringlets in her hood,
Amid the corn's saft bradie.

She hangs braw eardraps for her gems,
Like savage deckit lassies;
Her kirtle, for its fringéd hems,
Bears a' the bloomin grasses.

The daisy weaves her kerchief fair
Wi' eyelets thick embroider;
The blue heath, wi' its stem so spare,
Her vestures kindly border.

The cowslip an the buttercup,
Their gowden een upshinin,
Are bound wi' clover blossoms up,
An berry blooms entwinin.

She hangs the orange groves wi' bloom.
Syne thick for bride an vestal;
She gi'es a' flowers the rich perfume
We ravish for the festal.

But best i' a' her queenly wreath
The royal rose surpasses;
For grace, for hue, for form, for breath,
She shines o'er lawns an mosses.

She kens na peer in a' the land;
Her rival i' the water,
The lily, swayed by naiad wand,
The loch's ain bonnie dochter;—

Her bell the temple pure may shine
O' some sweet vestal fairie,
Where incense, frae its gowden shrine,
Burns sweet through a' the airie.

Her braid leaves, i' the silver sheen,
O' waters calmly sleepin,
An auld mosaic might ha' been
For dancin sprites light leapin

Her shinin calyx, red and green,
Gleams white at ilka partin,
Like marble, thro' some fluted screen,
Its curved scrolls gently startin.

'Tis sich the water lifts abune,
Out frae its mossie beddin;
Nor will we find its peerie sune
For tryste, for fair, or weddin.

There was silence for many moments after the echoes of the impromptu ceased, and then there were many eyes in that royal train who saw the Lady Isabel rallied and the Lady Margaret drooped, as they each listened to the minstrel fantasy of the Marquis. True, it was not explicit. "The loch's ain bonnie dochter" might not o'erpower "the royal rose," but it seemed as though this were the intimation. Each lady had received a most delicate compliment; each should at least appear grateful, and not too anxious.

The Marquis saw that neither of them was neglected; the king was most considerate; and, after a gay visit, each was free to return to her own domain.

Some marvelled slightly when, a few months after, the Highlanders at the Linn met for a wedding feast, and the king's benison was asked and granted, as the Marquis and Lady Isabel were made one. The Lady Margaret sat in her

bower stifling her wrath, and wondering at the ring which, while at Holyrood, had found its mysterious way to her casket, and which she always attributed to the Marquis, for upon it was inscribed the motto, "My love abides forever." These also were the words embroidered by Lady Isabel upon her new lord's newest banneret; and Lady Margaret wondered at this coincidence.

But, while she shut herself up within her bower, concealing her chagrin and disappointment as best she might, she saw from her lonely window the snow-white banneret fluttering in the mountain breeze, and upon its folds that roseate blazonry, in mockery, at least, of one fond heart, "My love abides forever."

In time, the Rose of the Loch might have recovered her serenity, and forgotten the troubler of her peace. But even to her secluded bower came words of dread, that were also — she trembled to feel it — words of hope. The Lily of the Linn was passing away, like a snow-wreath in the troubled waters. No one knew how it was, but she came to be like the faint shadow of her bridal self; and then the minstrel harp was tuned to wailing, for Isabel, their lady, was now white with the pallor of death, and the pale Lily of the Linn might open an eye upon its waters nevermore.

The widowed Marquis received condolence and sympathy from the king; and a royal herald came confirming all his marital rights. For a while his escutcheon was shrouded in black; and then the period of mourning was cut short; for, around the loch, and through the glens, might be traced the streaming of that motto on the winds, "My love abides forever."

The Lady Margaret looked from "her high window," and saw the banner, the horse, and his rider; and a new hope was born of the old one that had been so buried in her heart. It needed few pleadings to obtain for the Lord Marquis access to her bower; and then, with those cheating words that do not cheat, those protestations of love that are not half believed, he made his peace. True, he alluded to a wrong done her, out also to a position where the heart is despot, and will choose its love; while yet the knightly faith is pledged, and must not be forsworn, though the knight himself be the greatest sufferer. He told, also, of the severe punishment endured for his involuntary sin. These self-inflicted penances have great value; and the Lady Margaret so appreciated the sufferings of the Marquis, that she forgave him all, and promised to become his bride.

These tidings were received with sad forebodings by all the clansmen of the Loch and Linn

They prophesied many woes upon the fickle laird, who should so soon forget the lily's light in the deep hues of the blushing rose; and they boded no good, but haply ill, from the strange coming union of Loch and Linn.

When the tidings were openly proclaimed, and orders sent with preparations for bridal feast and wassail, the old servants at the tower said it might be well that the Marquis was now at Holyrood, or it might be ill, for the falling Linn moaned with most fearful, dirge-like music in the day, and all night long. Low whisperings of the wailing Linn came even to the Lady Margaret's ears; but why should she heed them, who was so busy with her bridal *trousseau*, and the rich silks and laces just coming in from France? The Linn might wail, if so it pleased the old tower clansmen to interpret its echoes; that would not prevent her bridal barge from skimming o'er the loch; and the time had, in truth, come, when the clansmen of the heights might mourn, for now were they indeed to be subject to their old enemies.

There was a strange sense of pride in the new power that was transferring to the Lady of the Loch, and a wrong wish that her dead rival could look from her tomb, and see the waters of Loch and Linn mingling in one tide above her resting-place.

The Marquis had returned with a gay brow, and a step that proclaimed him laird of all the Highlands round, to his tower at the Linn. He did not rest there long, for the Lady Margaret, with all her bridal train, was waiting for him at her castle. There were gay knights from Holyrood, and some from France, 'twas said, with troubadours and minnesingers from afar. The jest and wine passed round; loud wassail filled the hall; but though the bride was very fair, and her riches seemed so great, there was a shadow, as of a funeral pall, upon the Marquis's heart. He strove to be of good cheer, but his brow was very pale, and his chestnut locks were damp with other dews than those of night, or of a dancer's weariness. Lady Margaret had never been more splendid in her brilliance; even the bridegroom's dread had no echo in the bosom of the bride.

At length the tedious courtesies were over; the guests departed, and the loving twain had entered their bridal bower.

Little could they have enjoyed therein. No one knows what they there suffered; for, ere the morning dawned, the linn came tumbling fiercely from its fastnesses, and the loch was overflowed. Most of the servants and clansmen saved their lives; and boats were brought by faithful servitors for the new laird and their well-loved lady

But they never appeared at door, bastion, window, or battlement; and when old Nurse Bessie clambered through the rent staircase to their chamber, she returned dumb with terror. Even in after times it almost renewed her hysteric fears to recall the terrible features of the dead Isabel, as she rose from the waters of the linn, and wound her misty arms, and spread her pall of spray, over the two lovers, while they lay in a fearful embrace, with their glazed eyes fixed on her, and their stony hands upraised in prayer.

When the torrents had subsided, the dead bodies were found, and placed in one grave, where their overthrown chapel but late had been. The king placed a white monument over them; and through the earth a fountain bubbled up, whose rise and fall told that its source was far away in the fastness of the linn. The monument is still there, but all too moss grown for the tourist's eye; for the fountain still weeps over it, with a wail like that of a woman; and none has ever ventured since to unite the remnants of what is left at the Loch and at the Linn.

"And for what proportion of this are we to go in a body and express our thanks to Aleck?" asked Sophy.

"To Aleck be all the praise," returned Phil. "But, Sophy, if you wish to thank him, you must go up two flights of stairs, into a certain snug little attic; for I opine that Aleck is in the position now in which Lady Isabel found her recreant lover, when she came to take vengeance upon him."

"Only minus the sweet rose he held to his breast," said Ben; "and which the ruthless lady more than 'washed in a shower.' But what a memory or what a fancy our Sandy must have! If Phil could tack two rhymes together, I should suspect him of the poetry; for after all, how can we be sure that it is good Scotch lingo?"

"If you will acknowledge it to be *good poetry*, of any kind or kin, I will feel much obliged," retorted Phil.

"I did not like it," said Katie, "because I could not understand it."

"You would like to have it translated into good English," said Lottie. "Well, I will try to oblige you, for I know how unpleasant it must be to listen to the jargon of an unknown tongue."

"This earth hath many a floweret fair,
And every tree its blossom."

"Hold," said Phil; "*ilka* has more the significance of *each* than of *every*."

"This earth hath many a floweret fair,
And each tree its blossom."

"Hold your peace, and let the rhymes go as they are. If Ellen and Katie will read them over attentively, they will get every word of the sense."

"No doubt of that," said Ben; "and for the nonsense, let it remain in the mysterious Scotch mantle in which Phil has enveloped it."

"But, Ellen and Katie, have you no garlands to crown us, now that our tasks have been so successfully accomplished?"

"You must have some *real laurel* for Phil, the poet," said Ben. "Your shams will not answer in return for such stern verities as his Scotch verses."

"Phil shall have a laurel crown, and you, too, dear Ben, a garland of bay, for your fine Clerk of the Weather, whom we think of every day," said Sophy, smiling.

"And we will find some good publisher, to whom we will offer our stories, with the drawings that have been suggested by them; and it may be that other children will be permitted to enjoy, at second hand, the narratives prepared for you," added their uncle.

"And hope for them some better fate than once befell a certain Alexandrian library," said Ben, who seemed very desirous to have the las word.

"And what shall we call our bock?"

"The Fireside Fay," said Eva.

"There is a work announced, called 'Fireside Fairies;' so that will not do."

"The Ingle Imp," said Ben.

"A good title for your own work, when you, too, shall come forth with *Recollections of my Childhood*," answered Phil.

"Cottage Stories," interposed their father.

"What a homespun name!" said uncle Charles; "but it will suit the parents."

"Happy Hours," said Sophy.

"Why not," said aunt Mary, "unite the last two? and then it may be both young and old will be satisfied with the title page."

"And, while we are together, let us make some arrangements for next year's stories," said their uncle. "I do not like to be called upon for impromptus."

"What!" said Ben, "shall we give out parts? That is too much like school compositions."

"No; there need be no obligation to follow out the suggestion of our theme distributers. Who shall they be?"

"Father and mother!" "Aunt and uncle!" "It is a unanimous vote."

"What shall Phil write?"

"I beg your pardons, all; but mine is commenced — The Magic Cord."

"What was magical about it?"

"It would never break"

"Hang it!" said Ben. "No excuse me. I mean hang with it."

"Ben is a chatterbox; he shall write the history of a TALKING SIXPENCE."

"Shall it be history or autobiography? expostulation and recrimination, or narration and argumentation?"

"All or either, as you please."

"And Fred?"

"Mine is begun, of THE WONDERFUL SHOES."

"Why wonderful?"

"They never went the wrong way."

"Better than seven-league boots, for our traders, politicians, and soldiers."

"And Lottie?"

"THE BORBUALIAN PRINCESS AND HER TWELVE FAIRYLETTES."

"Eva's is written, and aunt's, and mother's. Father must recall some more legends; and uncle some more medical wonders."

"But Sophy?"

"THE SILENT PALACE."

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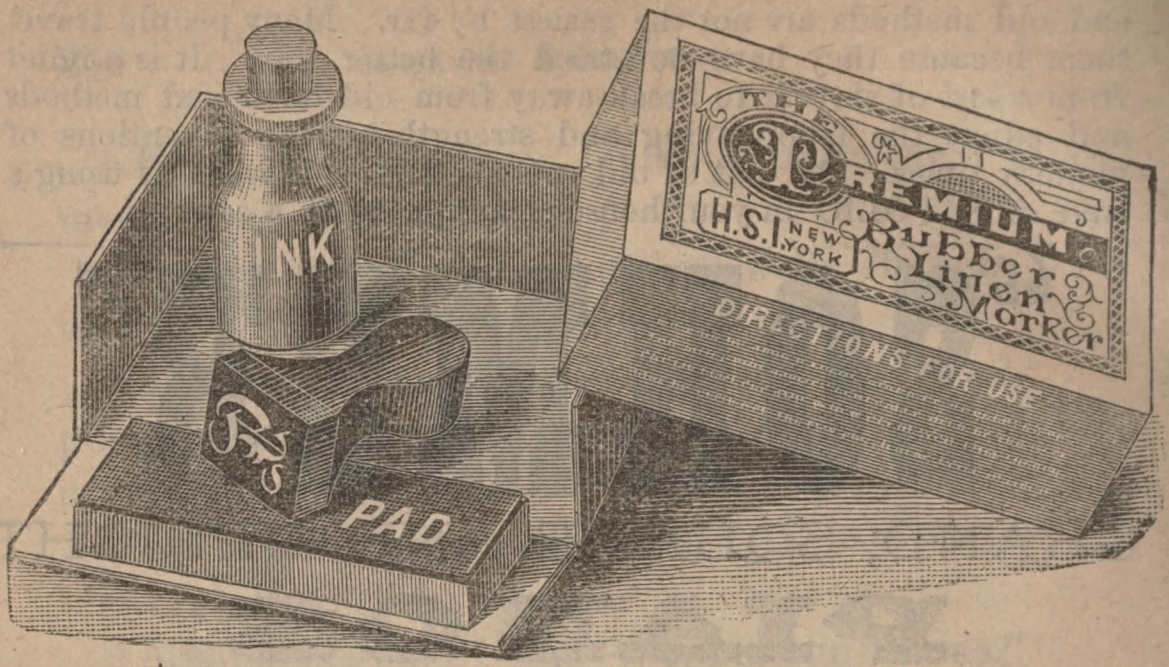

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